

Galg Lc

Q. HORATII FLACCI
E P I S T O L A E *H*

A D

P I S O N E' S,

E T

A U G U S T U M:

WITH AN ENGLISH

COMMENTARY AND NOTES:

TO WHICH ARE ADDED

CRITICAL DISSERTATIONS.

BY THE

REVEREND MR. HURD.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

THE FIFTH EDITION,

CORRECTED AND ENLARGED.

VOL. I.

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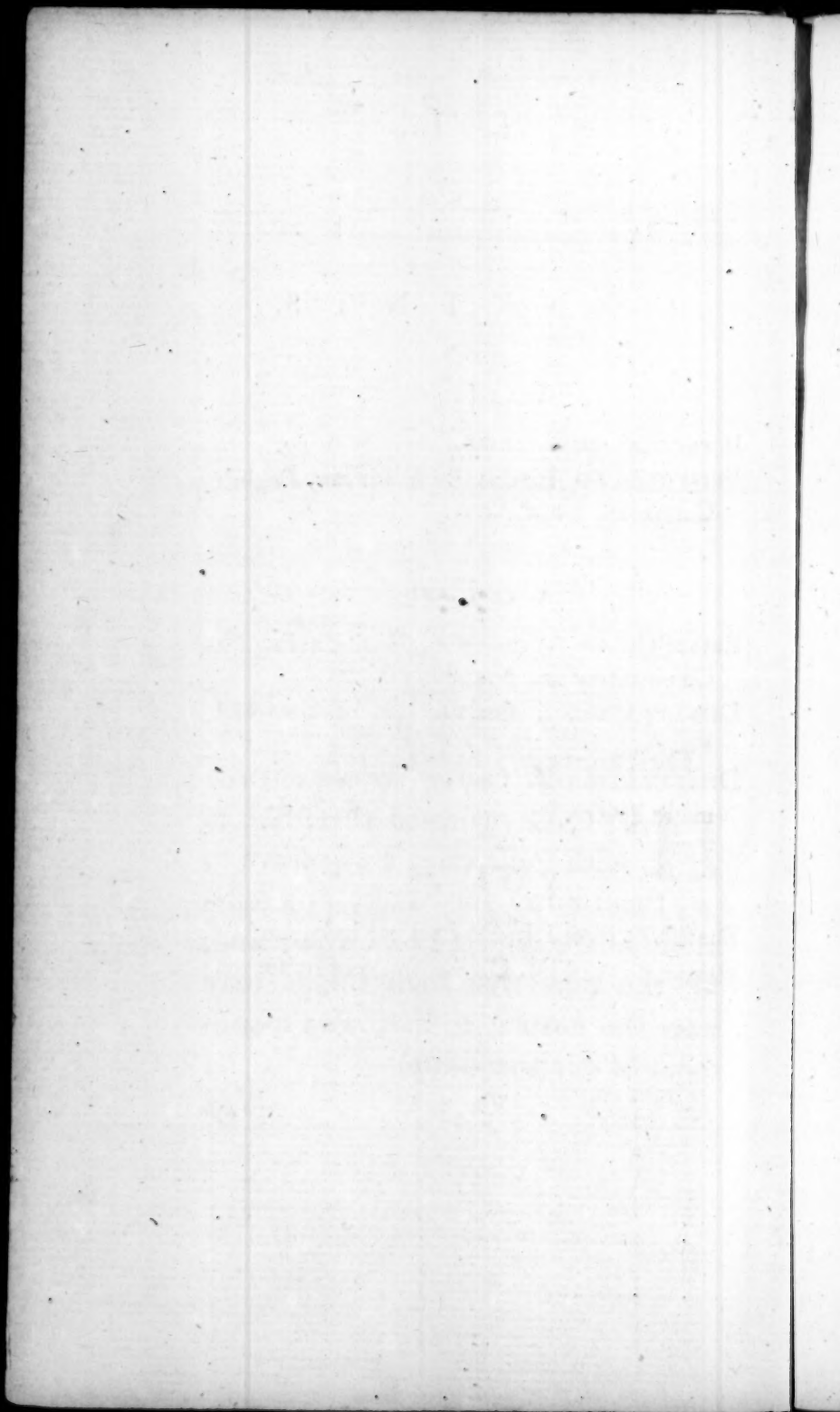
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TO

SIR EDWARD LYTTTELTON, BART.

DEAR SIR,

HAVING reviewed these Sheets with some care, I beg leave to put them into your hands, as a testimony of the respect I bear you ; and, for the time that such things may have the fortune to live, as a monument of our friendship.

a 3

You

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You see, by the turn of this address, you have nothing to fear from that offensive adulation, which has so much dishonoured Letters. You and I have lived together on other terms. And I should be ashamed to offer you even such a trifle as this, in a manner that would give you a right to think meanly of its author.

Your extreme delicacy allows me to say nothing of my obligations, which otherwise would demand my warmest acknowledgments. For your constant favour has followed me in all ways, in which you could contrive to express it. And indeed I have never known any man more sensible to the good offices of his friends, and even to their good intentions, or more disposed, by every proper method, to acknowledge them. But you much over-rate the little services, which it has been in my power to render to you. I had the
1 honour

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honour to be intrusted with a part of your education, and it was my duty to contribute all I could to the success of it. But the task was easy and pleasant. I had only to cultivate that good sense, and those generous virtues, which you brought with you to the University, and which had already grown up to some maturity under the care of a man, to whom we had both of us been extremely obliged; and who possessed every talent of a perfect institutor of youth in a degree, which, I believe, has been rarely found in any of that profession, since the days of *Quintilian*.

I wish this small tribute of respect, in which I know how cordially you join with me, could be any honour to the memory of an excellent person [a],

[a] The Reverend Mr. BUDWORTH, Head-Master of the Grammar School at BREWOOD, in Staffordshire. He died in 1745.

who

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who loved us both, and was less known, in his life-time, from that obscure situation to which the caprice of fortune oft condemns the most accomplished characters, than his highest merit deserved.

It was to cherish and improve that taste of polite letters, which his early care had instilled into you, that you required me to explain to you the following exquisite piece of the best poet. I recollect with pleasure how welcome this slight essay then was to you; and am secure of the kind reception you will now give to it; improved, as I think it is, in some respects, and presented to you in this public way.—I was going to say, how much you benefited by this poet (the fittest of all others, for the study of a gentleman) in your acquaintance with his *moral*, as well as critical writings; and how successfully you applied
your-

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yourself to every other part of learning, which was thought proper for you—But I remember my engagements with you, and will not hazard your displeasure by saying too much. It is enough for me to add, that I truly respect and honour you; and that, for the rest, I indulge in those hopes, which every one, who knows you, entertains from the excellence of your nature, from the hereditary honour of your family, and from an education in which you have been trained to the study of the best things.

I am,

DEAR SIR,

Your most faithful and

most obedient Servant,

EMAN. COLL. CAMB.
June 21, 1757.

R. HURD.

INTRODUCTION.

IT is agreed on all hands, that the antients are our masters in the *art* of composition. Such of their writings, therefore, as deliver instructions for the exercise of this *art*, must be of the highest value. And, if any of them hath acquired a credit, in this respect, superior to the rest, it is, perhaps, the *following work*: which the learned have long since considered as a kind of *summary* of the rules of good writing; to be gotten by heart by every young student; and to whose decisive authority the greatest masters in taste and composition must finally submit.

But the more unquestioned the credit of this poem is, the more it will concern the public, that it be justly and accurately understood. The writer of these sheets then believed it might be of use, if he took some pains to clear the sense, connect the method, and ascertain the scope and purpose, of this admired epistle. Others, he knew indeed, and some of the first fame for critical learning, had been before him in this attempt. Yet he did not find himself prevented by their labours; in which, besides innumerable

lesser faults, he, more especially, observed two inveterate errors, of such a sort, as must needs perplex the genius, and distress the learning, of *any* commentator. The *one* of these respects the SUBJECT; the other, the METHOD of the *Art of Poetry*. It will be necessary to say something upon each.

1. That the *Art of Poetry*, at large, is not the *proper* subject of this piece, is so apparent, that it hath not escaped the dullest and least attentive of its critics. For, however all the different *kinds* of poetry might appear to enter into it, yet every one saw, that *some* at least were very slightly considered: whence the frequent attempts, the *artes et institutiones poeticæ*, of writers both at home and abroad, to supply its deficiencies. But, though this truth was seen and confessed, it unluckily happened, that the sagacity of his numerous commentators went no further. They still considered this famous epistle as a *collection*, though not a *system*, of criticisms on poetry in general; with this concession however, that the stage had evidently the largest share in it [a]. Under the influence of this prejudice, several writers of name took upon them to comment and explain it: and with the success, which was to be expected from so fatal a mis-

[a] *Satyra hæc est in sui sæculi poetas, PRÆCIPUE vero in Romanum drama. Baxter.*

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take on setting out, as the not seeing, "that the proper and sole purpose of the author, was, not to abridge the Greek critics, whom he probably never thought of; nor to amuse himself with composing a short critical system, for the general use of poets, which every line of it absolutely confutes; but, simply to criticize the ROMAN DRAMA." For to this end, not the tenor of the work only, but, as will appear, every single precept in it, ultimately refers. The mischiefs of this original error have been long felt. It hath occasioned a constant perplexity in defining the *general* method, and in fixing the import of *particular* rules. Nay its effects have reached still further. For conceiving, as they did, that the whole had been composed out of the Greek critics, the labour and ingenuity of its interpreters have been misemployed in picking out authorities, which were not wanted, and in producing, or, more properly, by their studied refinements in *creating*, conformities, which were never designed. Whence it hath come to pass, that, instead of investigating the order of the poet's own reflexions, and scrutinizing the peculiar state of the Roman stage (the methods, which common sense and common criticism would prescribe) the world hath been nauseated with insipid lectures on *Aristotle* and *Phalereus*; whose solid sense hath

been so attenuated and subtilized by the delicate operation of French criticism, as hath even gone some way towards bringing the *art* itself into disrepute.

2. But the wrong explications of this poem have arisen, not from the misconception of the *subject* only, but from an inattention to the METHOD of it. The *latter* was, in part, the genuine consequence of the *former*. For, not suspecting an unity of design in the subject, its interpreters never looked for, or could never find, a consistency of disposition in the method. And this was indeed the very block upon which HEINSIUS, and, before him, JULIUS SCALIGER, himself stumbled. These illustrious critics, with all the force of genius, which is required to disembarraßs an involved subject, and all the aids of learning, that can lend a ray to enlighten a dark one, have, notwithstanding, found themselves utterly unable to unfold the order of this epistle; insomuch, that SCALIGER [b] hath boldly pronounced the conduct of it to be *vicious*; and HEINSIUS had no other way to evade the charge, than by recurring to the forced and uncritical expedient of a licentious transposition. The truth is, they were both in one common error, That the poet's purpose had been to write a criticism of the art of poetry at large, and not,

[b] Præf. in LIB. POET. et l. vi. p. 338.

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as is here shewn, of the Roman drama in particular. But there is something more to be observed, in the case of HEINSIUS. For, as will be made appear in the notes on particular places, this critic did not pervert the order of the piece, from a simple mistake about the drift of the subject, but, also, from a total inapprehension of the genuine charm and beauty of the *epistolary method*. And, because I take this to be a principal cause of the wrong interpretations, that have been given of all the epistles of Horace; and it is, in itself, a point of curious criticism, of which little or nothing hath been said by any good writer, I will take the liberty to enlarge upon it.

THE EPISTLE, however various in its appearances, is, in fact, but of *two* kinds; *one* of which may be called the DIDACTIC; the *other*, the ELEGIAC epistle. By the FIRST I mean all those epistles, whose end is to *instruct*; whether the subject be *morals, politics, criticism*, or, in general, *human life*: by the LATTER, all those whose end is to *move*; whether the occasion be *love, friendship, jealousy*, or other private distresses. If there are some of a lighter kind in Horace, and other good writers, which seem not reducible to either of these two classes, they are to be regarded only, as the triflings of their pen, and deserve not to be considered as making a *third* and distinct species of this poem.

Now these two kinds of the *epistle*, as they differ widely from each other in their *subject* and *end*, so do they likewise in their *original*: though both *flourished* at the same time, and are both wholly *Roman*.

I. The former, or DIDACTIC epistle, was, in fact, the true and proper offspring of the SATIRE. It will be worth while to reflect how this happened. *Satire*, in its origin, I mean in the rude *fescennine farce*, from which the idea of this poem was taken, was a mere extemporaneous jumble of mirth and ill-nature. ENNIUS, who had the honour of introducing it under its new name, without doubt, civilized both, yet left it without form or method; it being only, in his hands, a rhapsody of poems on different subjects, and in different measures. Common sense disclaiming the extravagance of this heterogeneous mixture, LUCILIUS advanced it, in its next step, to an unity of *design* and *metre*; which was so considerable a change, that it procured him the high appellation of INVENTOR of this poem. Though, when I say, that Lucilius introduced into satire *an unity of metre*, I mean only, in *the same piece*; for the measure, in different satires, appears to have been different. That the *design* in him was *one*, I conclude, *first*, Because Horace expressly informs us, that *the form or kind of writing* in the satires of Lucilius was exactly

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actly the same with *that* in his own; in which no one will pretend, that there is the least appearance of that rhapsodical, detached form, which made the character of the *old satire*. But, principally, because, on any other supposition, it does not appear, what could give Lucilius a claim to that high appellation of *INVENTOR* of this poem. That he was the *first*, who copied the manner of the *old comedy* in satire, could never be sufficient for this purpose. For all, that he derived into it from thence, was, as Quintilian speaks, *libertas atque inde acerbitas et abunde salis*. It sharpened his *invektive*, and polished his *wit*, that is, it improved the *air*, but did not alter the *form* of the satire. As little can a right to this title be pleaded from the *uniformity of measure*, which he introduced into it: For *this*, without an *unity of design*, is so far from being an alteration for the better, that it even heightens the absurdity; it being surely more reasonable to adapt different measures to different subjects, than to treat a number of inconnected and quite different subjects in the *same* measure. When therefore Horace tells us, that Lucilius was the *Inventor* of the satire, it must needs be understood, that he was the *FIRST*, who, from its former confused state, reduced it into a regular consistent poem, respecting one main *end*, as well as observing one *measure*. Little now

remained for HORACE but to polish and refine. His only material alteration was, that he appropriated to the satire ONE, that is the heroic metre.

From this short history of the satire we collect, 1. that its design was *one*: And, 2. we learn, what was the general form of its composition. For, arising out of a loose, disjointed, miscellany, its method, when most regular, would be free and unconstrained; nature demanding some chain of connexion, and a respect to its origin requiring that connexion to be slight and somewhat concealed. But its *aim*, as well as origin, exacted this careless method. For being, as Diomedes observes, *archæ comædiæ caractere compositum*, "professedly written after the manner of the old comedy," it was of course to admit the familiarity of the comic muse; whose genius is averse from all constraint of *order*, save that only which a natural, successive train of thinking unavoidably draws along with it. And this, by the way, accounts for the dialogue air, so frequent in the Roman satire, as likewise for the looser numbers which appeared so essential to the grace of it. It was in learned allusion to this comic genius of the satire, that Mr. Pope hath justly characterized it in the following manner:

"Horace.

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“ Horace still charms with graceful negligence,
 “ And, without method, TALKS us into sense.”

2. It being now seen, what was the real form of the *satire*, nothing, it is plain, was wanting, but the application of a particular address, to constitute the *didactic epistle*: the structure of this poem, as prescribed by the laws of nature and good sense, being in nothing different from that of the *other*. For here, 1. an *unity* of subject or design is indispensably necessary, the freedom of a miscellaneous matter being permitted only to the familiar letter. And, 2. not professing *formally* to instruct (which alone justifies the severity of strict method) but, when of the gravest kind, in the way of address only to *insinuate* instruction, it naturally takes an air of negligence and inconnexion, such as we have before seen essential to the satire. All which is greatly confirmed by the testimony of *one*, who could not be uninformed in these matters. In addressing his friend on the object of his studies, he says,

five

*Liventem satiram nigra rubigine turpes,
 Seu tua NON ALIA splendescat epistola CURA.*

[Stat. lib. i. Sylv. Tiburt. M. V.]

plainly intimating, that the rules and labour of composition were exactly the same in these two poems. Though the critics on Statius, not apprehending

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prehending this identity, or exact correspondence between the *satire* and *epistle*, have unnecessarily, and without warrant, altered the text, in this place, from ALIA into ALTA.

3. The general form and structure of *this* epistle being thus clearly understood, it will now be easy, in few words, to deduce the peculiar laws of its composition.

And, 1. it cannot wholly divest itself of all method: For, having only one point in view, it must of course pursue it by some kind of connexion. The progress of the mind in rational thinking requires, that the chain be never broken entirely, even in its freest excursions.

2. As there must needs be a *connexion*, so that *connexion* will best answer its end and the purpose of the writer, which, whilst it leads, by a sure train of thinking, to the conclusion in view, conceals itself all the while, and leaves to the reader the satisfaction of supplying the intermediate links, and joining together, in his own mind, what is left in a seeming posture of neglect and inconnexion. The art of furnishing this gratification, so respectful to the sagacity of the reader, without putting him to the trouble of a painful investigation, is what constitutes the supreme charm and beauty of EPISTOLARY METHOD.

II. What

II. What hath hitherto been advanced respects chiefly the *didactic* form. It remains to say something of that other *species* of the epistle, the ELEGIAC; which, as I observed, had quite another *original*. For this apparently sprung up from what is properly called the *Elegy*: a poem of very ancient Greek extraction: naturally arising from the plaintive, querulous humour of mankind; which, under the pressure of any grief, is impatient to break forth into wailings and tender expostulations, and finds a kind of relief in indulging and giving a loose to that flow of sorrow, which it hath not strength or resolution wholly [c] to restrain. This is the account of the *Elegy* in its proper Greek form; a negligent, inconnected, abrupt species of writing, perfectly suited to an indolent disposition and passionate heart. Such was OVID's; who, taking advantage of this character of the elegy, contrived [d] a new kind of poetry without the expence of much invention, or labour to himself. For collecting, as it were, those scattered

[c] *Mærorem minui*, says Tully, grieving for the loss of his daughter; *dolorem nec potui, nec, si possem, VELLEM*. [Ep. ad Att. xii. 23.] A striking picture of real grief!

[d] *Vel tibi composita cantetur* EPISTOLA voce;

IGNOTUM HOC ALIIS ILLE NOVAVIT OPUS.

ART. AMAT. lib. iii. 345.

hints,

hints, which composed the elegy, and directing them to one principal view; and superadding a personal address, he became the author of what is here styled the *Elegiac* epistle; beautiful models of which we have in his *HEROIDES*, and the *Epistles from PONTUS*. We see then the difference of *this* from the *didactic* form. They have both one principal end and point in view. But the *Didactic*, being of a cooler and more sedate turn, pursues its design uniformly and connects easily. The *Elegiac*, on the contrary, whose end is *emotion*, not *instruction*, hath all the abruptness of irregular disordered passion. It catches at remote and distant hints, and starts at once into a digressive train of thinking, which it requires some degree of enthusiasm in the reader to follow.

Further than this it is not material to my present design to pursue this subject. More exact ideas of the form and constitution of this epistle, must be sought in that best example of it, the natural Roman poet. It may only be observed of the different qualities, necessary to those, who aspire to excel in these *two* species; that, as the *one* would make an impression on the *heart*, it can only do this by means of an exquisite *sensibility of nature and elegance of mind*; and that the *other*, attempting in the most inoffensive manner, to inform the *head*, must demand, to the full

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full accomplishment of its purpose, *superior good sense, the widest knowledge of life*, and, above all, *the politeness of a consummate address*. That the former was the characteristic of OVID's genius hath been observed, and is well known. How far the latter description agrees to HORACE, can be no secret to those of his readers who have any share, or conception, of these talents themselves. But matter, of this *nicer* kind are properly the objects, not of *criticism*, but of *sentiment*. Let it suffice then to examine the poet's practice, so far only, as we are enabled to judge of it by the standard of the preceding rules.

III. These rules are reducible to *three*.

1. *that there be an unity in the subject*. 2. *a connexion in the method*: and, 3. *that such connexion be easy*. All which I suppose to have been religiously observed in the poet's conduct of *this*, i. e. the *didactic* epistle. For,

[1.] The *subject* of each epistle is one: that is, one single point is prosecuted through the whole piece, notwithstanding that the address of the poet, and the delicacy of the subject, may sometimes lead him through a devious tract to it. Had his interpreters attended to this practice, so consonant to the rule of nature before explained, they could never have found *an art of poetry* in the epistle, we are about to examine.

[2.] This

[2.] This one point, however it hath not been seen [e], is constantly pursued by an uniform, consistent *method*; which is never more artificial, than when least apparent to a careless, inattentive reader. This should have stimulated his learned critics to seek the connexion of the poet's own ideas, when they magisterially set themselves to transpose or vilify his method.

[3.] This method is every where sufficiently *clear and obvious*; proceeding if not in the strictest forms of *disposition*, yet, in an easy, elegant progress, one hint arising out of another, and insensibly giving occasion to succeeding ones, just as the cooler genius of this *kind* required. This, lastly, should have prevented those, who have taken upon themselves to criticize *the art of poetry* by the laws of *this poem*, from concealing

[e] J. Scaliger says, *Epistolas, Græcorum more, Phœcyliæque Theognidis [Horatius] scripsit: præceptis philosophiæ devulsis minimeque inter se coherentibus. And of this Epistle, in particular, he presumes to say, De Arte quæres, quid sentiam. Quid? Equidem quod de Arte sine arte traditâ. And to the same purpose another great Critic; Non solum antiquorum dogmata in moralibus hoc habuere, ut axodachia non servarent, sed etiam alia de quibuscunque rebus præcepta. Sic Epistola Horatii ad Pisones de Poeticâ perpetuum ordinem seriemque NULLAM habet; sed ab uno præcepto ad aliud transiit, quamvis NULLA sit materiæ affinitas ad sensum connectendum. [Salmastii Not. in Epictetum et Simplicium, p. 13. Lugd. Bat. 1640.]*

their

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their ignorance of its real views under the cover of such abrupt and violent transitions, as might better agree to the impassioned *elegy*, than to the sedate *didactic epistle*.

To set this three-fold character, in the fullest light, before the view of the reader, I have attempted to explain the *Epistle to the Pisos*, in the way of continued commentary upon it. And, that the coherence of the several parts may be the more distinctly seen, the Commentary is rendered as concise as possible; some of the finer and less obvious connexions being more carefully observed and drawn out in the notes.

For the *kind* of interpretation itself, it must be allowed, of all others, the fittest to throw light upon a difficult and obscure subject, and, above all, to convey an exact idea of the scope and order of any work. It hath, accordingly, been so considered by several of the foreign, particularly the ITALIAN, critics; who have essayed long since to illustrate, in this way, the very piece before us. But the *success* of these foreigners is, I am sensible, a slender recommendation of their *method*. I chuse therefore to rest on the *single* authority of a great author, who, in his *edition* of our English Horace, the *best* that ever was given of any classic, hath now retrieved and established the full credit of it. What was the amusement of his pen, becomes, indeed,

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indeed, the *labour* of inferior writers. Yet, on these unequal terms, it can be no discredit to have aimed at some resemblance of one of the least of those *merits*, which shed their united honours on the name of the illustrious *friend* and *commentator* of Mr. POPE.

And, that the appearance of the several parts may be the more distinctly seen, the Commentary is rendered as concise as possible, some of the most and best observations concerning being more carefully observed and drawn out in the notes.

For the kind of inspection which is most allowed, of all others, the right to show light upon a difficult and obscure subject, and above all, to convey an exact idea of the scope and order of any work. It hath, accordingly, been to consider by a trial of the several parts, especially the *PRÆFATION*, critics, who have employed long time to illustrate, in this way, the very piece before me. But the want of these foreigners, as I am sensible, a slender recompensation of their labour. I could therefore to rest on the great authority of a great author, who in his edition of our English History, the last that ever was given or any classic, hath now corrected and established the full order of it. Q. H. O. *It was the amusement of his poor, becoming*

[1]
Q. HORATII FLACCI

ARS POETICA,

EPISTOLA AD PISONES.

HUMANO capiti cervicem pictor equinam
Jungere si velit, et varias inducere plumas
Undique collatis membris, ut turpiter atrum
Definat in piscem mulier formosa superne;
Spectatum admissi risum teneatis amici? 5
Credite, Pisones, isti tabulae fore librum
Perfimum, ejus, velut aegri somnia, vanae
Fingentur species; ut nec pes, nec caput uni

COMMENTARY.

THE subject of this piece being, as I suppose, *one*, viz. *the state of the Roman Drama*, and common sense requiring, even in the freest forms of composition, some kind of *method*, the intelligent reader will not be surprized to find the poet prosecuting his subject in a regular, well-ordered *plan*; which, for the more exact description of it, I distinguish into three parts:

I. The first of them [from l. 1 to 89] is preparatory to the main subject of the epistle, containing some general rules and reflexions on poetry, but principally with an eye to the following parts: by

VOL. I.

B

which

2 Q. HORATII FLACCI

Reddatur formae. Pictoribus atque poetis
Quidlibet audendi semper fuit aequae potestas: 10
Scimus, et hanc veniam petimusque damusque
vicissim:

Sed non ut placidis coeant inmitia; non ut

COMMENTARY.

which means it serves as an useful introduction to the poet's design, and opens with that air of ease and negligence, essential to the epistolary form.

II. The main body of the epistle [from l. 89 to 295] is laid out in regulating the *Roman* stage; but chiefly in giving rules for tragedy; not only as that was the sublimer species of the *Drama*, but, as it should seem, less cultivated and understood.

III. The last part [from l. 295 to the end] exhorts to correctness in writing; yet still with an eye, principally, to the *dramatic species*: and is taken up partly in removing the causes, that prevented it; and partly in directing to the use of such means, as might serve to promote it. Such is the general plan of the epistle. In order to enter fully into it, it will be necessary to trace the poet, attentively, through the elegant connexions of his own method.

P A R T I.

GENERAL REFLEXIONS ON POETRY.

THE epistle begins [to l. 9] with that general and fundamental precept of *preserving an unity in the subject and the disposition of the piece*. This is further explained by defining the use, and fixing the character, of *poetic licence* [from l. 9 to 13] which unskillful

Serpentes avibus gementur, tigribus agnî.
 Inceptis gravibus plerumque et magna professis
 Purpureus, late qui splendeat, unus et alter 15
 Adfuitur pannus: cum lucus, et ara Dianae,
 Et properantis aquae per amoenos ambitus agros,
 Aut flumen Rhenum, aut pluvius describitur
 arcus.

Sed nunc non erat his locus: et fortasse cupressum

Scis simulare: quid hoc, si fractis enatat exspes 20
 Navibus, aere dato qui pingitur? amphora coepit
 Institui, currente rota, cur urceus exit?

Denique fit quidvis; simplex dumtaxat et unum.
 Maxima pars vatum, pater et juvenes patre digni,

COMMENTARY.

ful writers often plead in defence of their transgressions against the law of UNITY. To l. 23 is considered and exposed that particular violation of *uniformity*, into which young poets especially, under the impulse of a warm imagination, are apt to run, arising from frequent and ill-timed descriptions. These, however beautiful in themselves, and with whatever mastery they may be executed, yet, if foreign to the subject, and incongruous to the place, where they stand, are extremely impertinent: a caution, the more necessary, as the fault itself wears the appearance of a *virtue*, and so writers [from l. 23 to 25] come to transgress the *rule of right* from their very ambition to observe it. There are two cases, in which this *ambition* remarkably misleads us. The

4 Q. HORATII FLACCI

Decipimur specie recti. Brevis esse laboro, 25
Obscurus fio : sectantem lenia nervi
Deficiunt animique : professus grandia turget :
Serpit humi tutus nimium timidusque procellae :
Qui variare cupit rem prodigialiter unam,
Delphinum filvis adpingit, fluctibus aprum. 30
In vitium ducit culpae fuga, si caret arte.
Aemilium circa ludum faber, unus et unguis
Exprimet, et mollis imitabitur aere capillos ;

COMMENTARY.

first is, when it tempts us to push an *acknowledged beauty* too far. Great beauties are always in the confines of great faults; and therefore, by affecting superior excellence, we are easily carried into absurdity. Thus [from l. 25 to 30] *brevity* is often *obscurity*; *sublimity*, *bombast*; *caution*, *coolness*; and, to come round to the point, a fondness for *varying and diversifying a subject*, by means of episodes and descriptions, such as are mentioned above [l. 15] will often betray a writer into that capital error of violating the *unity* of his piece. For, though variety be a real excellence under the conduct of true judgment, yet, when affected beyond the bounds of probability, and brought in solely to *strike* and *surprize*, it becomes unseasonable and absurd. The several episodes or descriptions, intended to give that variety, may be inserted in improper places; and then the absurdity is as great, as that of the painter, who according to the illustration of l. 19, 20, should introduce a cypress into a sea-piece, or, according to the illustration of the present verse, who paints a dolphin in a wood, or a boar in the sea.

2. Another

Infelix operis, summa : quia ponere totum
 Nesciet. hunc ego me, si quid componere curem,
 Non magis esse velim ; quam naso vivere pravo,
 Spectandum nigris oculis nigroque capillo.
 Sumite materiam vestris, qui scribitis, aequam
 Viribus ; et versate diu, quid ferre recusent, 39
 Quid valeant humeri. cui lecta potenter erit res,
 Nec facundia deferet hunc, nec lucidus ordo.
 Ordinis haec virtus erit et venus, aut ego fallor ;

COMMENTARY.

2. Another instance, in which we are misled by an ambition of attaining to what is right, is, when, through an excessive fear of committing faults, we disqualify ourselves for the just execution of a whole, or of such particulars, as are susceptible of real beauty. For not the affectation of superior excellencies only, but even

In vitium ducit culpae fuga, si caret arte.

This is aptly illustrated by the case of a sculptor. An over-scrupulous diligence to finish single and trivial parts in a statue, which, when most exact, are only not faulty, leaves him utterly incapable of doing justice to the more important members, and, above all, of designing and completing a whole with any degree of perfection. But this latter is commonly the defect of a minute genius ; who, having taken in hand a design, which he is by no means able to execute, naturally applies himself to labour and finish those parts, which he finds are within his power. It is of consequence therefore [from l. 38 to 40] for every writer to be well acquainted with the nature

6 Q. HORATII FLACCI

Ut jam nunc dicat, jam nunc debentia dici
 Pleraque differat et praesens in tempus omittat.
 Hoc amet, hoc spernat, promissi carminis auctor. 45
 In verbis etiam tenuis cautusque ferendis,
 Dixeris egregie, notum si callida verbum
 Reddiderit junctura novum, si forte necesse est
 Indiciis monstrare recentibus abdita rerum;
 Fingere cinctutis non exaudita Cethegis 50

COMMENTARY.

and extent of his own talents: and to be careful to chuse a subject, which is, in all its parts, proportioned to his strength and ability. Besides, from such an attentive survey of his subject, and of his capacity to treat it, he will also derive these further advantages [l. 41]. 1. That he cannot be wanting in a proper fund of matter, wherewith to enlarge under every head: nor, 2. can he fail, by such a well-weighed choice, to dispose of his subject in the best and most convenient method. Especially, as to the latter, which is the principal benefit, he will perceive [to l. 45] where it will be useful to preserve, and where to change, the natural order of his subject, as may best serve to answer the ends of poetry.

Thus far some general reflexions concerning *poetical distribution*; principally, as it may be affected by false notions, 1. Of *poetic licence* [l. 10] and, 2. Of *poetic perfection* [l. 25]. But the same causes will equally affect the *language*, as *method*, of poetry. To these then are properly subjoined some directions about the *use of words*. Now this particular depending so entirely on what is out of the reach of rule, as the

Continget: dabitque licentia sumta pudenter.
 Et nova factaque nuper habebunt verba fidem; si
 Graeco fonte cadent, parce detorta. quid autem;
 Caecilio Plautoque dabit Romanus, ademtum
 Virgilio Varioque? quo cur acquirere pauca, 55
 Si possum, invideor? quum lingua Catonis et
 Enni

COMMENTARY.

the fashion of the age, the taste of the writer, and his knowledge of the language in which he writes, the poet only gives directions about *new words*: or, since every language is necessarily imperfect, about the *coining of such words*, as the writer's necessity or convenience may demand. And here, after having prescribed [l. 46] a great *caution* and *sparingness* in the thing itself, he observes, 1. [to l. 49] That where it ought to be done, the better and less offensive way will be, not to coin a *word* entirely new (for this is ever a task of some envy) but, by means of an ingenious and happy position of a well-known word, in respect of some others, to give it a new air, and cast. Or, if it be necessary to *coin new words*, as it will be in subjects of an abstruse nature, and especially such as were never before treated in the language, that then, 2. [to l. 54] this liberty is very allowable; but that the reception of them will be more easy, if we derive them gently, and without too much violence, from their proper source, that is, from a language, as the Greek, already known, and approved. And, to obviate the prejudices of over-scrupulous critics on this head, he goes on [from l. 54 to l. 73] in a vein of popular illustration, to alledge, in favour of this li-

8 Q. HORATII FLACCI

Sermonem patrium ditaverit, et nova rerum
 Nomina protulerit. licuit, semperque licebit
 Signatum praesente nota procudere nummum.
 Ut filvis folia privos mutantur in annos ; 60
 Prima cadunt : ita verborum vetus interit aetas,
 Et juvenum ritu florent modo nata vigentque.
 Debemur morti nos, nostraque : sive receptus
 Terra Neptunus classis Aquilonibus arcet,
 Regis opus ; sterilisve palus prius aptaque remis 65
 Vicinas urbis alit, et grave septit aratrum :
 Seu cursum mutavit iniquum frugibus annis,
 Doctus iter melius : mortalia cuncta peribunt :
 Nedum sermonum stet honos, et gratia vivax,
 Multa renascentur, quae jam cecidere ; cadentque,
 Quae nunc sunt in honore vocabula : si volet usus,
 Quem penes arbitrium est, et jus, et norma lo-
 quendi. 72
 Res gestae regumque ducumque, et tristia bella,
 Quo scribi possent numero, monstravit Homerus,
 Versibus inpariter junctis querimonia primum, 75

COMMENTARY.

berty, the examples of ancient writers, and the vague, unsteady nature of language itself.

From these reflexions on poetry, at large, he proceeds now to *particulars*: the most obvious of which being the different *forms and measures* of poetic composition, he considers, in this view [from l. 75 to 86] the four great species of poetry, to which all others may be reduced, the *Epic, Elegiac, Dramatic,* and

Lyric,

Post etiam inclusa est voti sententia compos.
 Quis tamen exiguos elegos emisit auctor,
 Grammatici certant, et adhuc sub iudice lis est.
 Archilochum proprio rabies armavit iambo.
 Hunc focci cepere pedem grandesque cothurni, 80
 Alternis aptum sermonibus, et popularis
 Vincentem strepitus, et natum rebus agendis.
 Musa dedit fidibus Divos, puerosque Deorum,
 Et pugilem victorem, et equum certamine pri-
 mum,
 Et juvenum curas, et libera vina referre, 85
 Descriptas fervare vices operumque colores,
 Cur ego, si nequeo ignoroque, poeta salutor?
 Cur nescire, pudens prave, quam discere malo?
 Versibus exponi tragicis res comica non volt:
 Indignatur item privatis ac prope focco 90
 Dignis carminibus narrari coena Thyestae.
 Singula quaeque locum teneant sortita decentem,
 Interdum tamen et vocem comoedia tollit,

COMMENTARY.

Iyric. But the distinction of the *measures* to be observed in the several species of poetry is so obvious, that there can scarcely be any mistake about them. The difficulty is to know [from l. 86 to 89] how far, each may partake of the *spirit* of other, without destroying that *natural and necessary difference*, which ought to subsist betwixt them all. To explain this, which is a point of great nicety, he considers [from l. 89 to 99] the case of dramatic poetry; the two

10 Q. HORATII FLACCI

Iratusque Chremes tumido dilitigat ore.
 Et tragicus plerumque dolet sermone pedestri. 95
 Telephus aut Peleus, cum pauper et exul uterque,
 Projicit ampullas et sesquipedalia verba,
 Si curat cor spectantis tetigisse querela.
 Non satis est pulchra esse poemata; dulcia sunt,
 Et quocunque volent, animum auditoris agunto.
 Ut ridentibus adrident, ita flentibus adflent

COMMENTARY.

species of which are as distinct from each other, as any two can be; and yet there are times, when the features of the one will be allowed to resemble those of the other. For, 1. Comedy, in the passionate parts, will admit of a tragic elevation: and, 2. Tragedy, in its soft distressful scenes, condescends to the ease of familiar conversation. But the poet had a further view in chusing this instance. For he gets by this means into the main of his subject, which was dramatic poetry, and by the most delicate transition imaginable, proceeds [from l. 89 to 323] to deliver a series of rules, interspersed with historical accounts, and enlivened by digressions, for the regulation and improvement of the ROMAN STAGE.

P A R T II.

DIRECTIONS FOR THE REGULATION AND IMPROVEMENT OF THE ROMAN STAGE.

HAVING fixed the distinct limits and provinces of the two species of the drama, the poet enters directly on his subject, and considers, I. [from l. 99 to

Humani voltus. si vis me flere, dolendum est
 Primum ipsi tibi: tunc tua me infortunia laedent.
 Telephe, vel Peleu, male si mandata loqueris,
 Aut dormitabo, aut ridebo. tristia moestum 105
 Voltum verba decent; iratum, plena minarum;
 Ludentem, lasciva; severum, seria dictu.
 Format enim Natura prius nos intus ad omnem
 Fortunarum habitum; juvat, aut impellit ad iram,
 Aut ad humum moerore gravi deducit, et angit:
 Post effert animi motus interprete lingua.
 Si dicentis erunt fortunis absona dicta,
 Romani tollent equitesque patresque chachinnum.
 Intererit multum, Divusne loquatur, an heros;
 Maturusne senex, an adhuc florente juventa 115
 Fervidus; et matrona potens, an sedula nutrix;
 Mercatorne vagus, cultorne virentis agelli;
 Colchus, an Assyrius; Thebis nutritus, an Argis.

COMMENTARY.

119] the properties of the TRAGIC STYLE; which will be different, 1. [to l. 111] according to the *internal state and character* of the speaker: thus one sort of expression will become the *angry*, another, the *sorrowful*; this, the *gay*, that, the *severe*. And, 2. [from l. 111 to 119] according to the outward circumstances of *rank, age, office, or country*.

II. Next [to l. 179] he treats of the CHARACTERS, which are of two sorts. 1. *Old ones, revived*: and 2. *Invented, or new ones*. In relation to the *first* [from l. 119

Aut famam sequere, aut sibi convenientia finge,
 Scriptor. Homereum si forte reponis Achillem;
 Impiger, iracundus, inexorabilis, acer,
 Jura neget sibi nata, nihil non arroget armis.
 Sit Medea ferox invictaque, flebilis Ino,
 Perfidus Ixion, Io vaga, tristis Orestes.
 Si quid inexpertum scenae committis, et audes 125
 Personam formare novam; servetur ad imum
 Qualis ab incepto processerit, et sibi constet.
 Difficile est proprie communia dicere: tuque
 Rectius Iliacum carmen deducis in actus,
 Quàm si proferres ignota indictaque primus. 130
 Publica materies privati juris erit, si
 Non circa vilem patulumque moraberis orbem;
 Nec verbum verbo curabis reddere fidus
 Interpres; nec desilies imitator in artum,
 Unde pedem proferre pudor vetet aut operis lex.

COMMENTARY.

1. 119 to 125] the precept is, to *follow fame*; that is, to fashion the character according to the *received standing idea*, which tradition and elder times have consecrated; that idea being the sole test, whereby to judge of it. 2. In respect of the *latter* [from l. 125 to 128] the great requisite is *uniformity*, or *consistency of representation*. But the formation of quite *new characters* is a work of great difficulty and hazard. For here, there is no generally received and fixed *archetype* to work after; but every one judges, of common right, according to the extent and comprehension

Nec sic incipies, ut scriptor cyclius olim :

FORTUNAM PRIAMI CANTABO, ET NOBILE
BELLUM.

Quid dignum tanto feret hic promissor hiatu ?

Parturiunt montes : nascetur ridiculus mus.

Quanto rectius hic, qui nil molitur inepte ! 140

DIC MIHI, MUSA, VIRUM, CAPTAE POST MOE-
NIA TROJAE,

QUI MORES HOMINUM MULTORUM VIDET ET
URBIS.

Non fumum ex fulgore, sed ex fumo dare lucem

Cogitat, ut speciosa dehinc miracula promat,

Antiphaten, Scyllamque, et cum Cylope Charyb-
din.

145

COMMENTARY.

hension of his own idea. Therefore [to l. 136] he advises to labour and refit *old characters and subjects*; particularly those, made known and authorized by the practice of Homer and the epic writers; and directs, at the same time, by what means to avoid that *servility and unoriginal air*, so often charged upon such pieces. I said *characters and subjects*; for his method leading him to guard against servility of imitation in point of *characters*, the poet chose to dispatch the whole affair of *servile imitation* at once, and therefore [to l. 136] includes *subjects*, as well as *characters*.

But this very advice, about taking the subjects and characters from the epic poets, might be apt to lead into two faults, arising from the ill conduct of those
poets

14 Q. HORATII FLACCI

Nec reditum Diomedis ab interitu Meleagri,
 Nec gemino bellum Trojanum orditur ab ovo :
 Semper ad eventum festinat ; et in medias res,
 Non secus ac notas, auditorem rapit : et quæ
 Desperat tractata nitescere posse, relinquit : 150
 Atque ita mentitur, sic veris falsa remiscet,
 Primo ne medium, medio ne discrepet imum.

COMMENTARY.

poets themselves. For, 1. [to l. 146] the dignity and importance of a subject, made sacred by ancient fame, had sometimes occasioned a boastful and ostentatious beginning, than which nothing can be more offensive. And, 2. The whole story being composed of great and striking particulars, injudicious writers, for fear of losing any part of it, which might serve to adorn their work, had been led to follow the *round of plain historic order*, and so had made the disposition of their piece *uninteresting and unartful*. Now both these improprieties, which appear so shocking in the *epic poem*, must needs, with still higher reason, deform the *tragic*. For, taking its rise, not from the flattering views of the *poet*, but the real situation of the *actor*, its opening must, of necessity, be very simple and unpretending. And being, from its short term of action, unable naturally to prepare and bring about many events, it, of course, confines itself to *one* ; as also for the sake of producing a due *distress* in the plot ; which can never be wrought up to any *trying* pitch, unless the whole attention be made to fix on *one* single object. The way to avoid both these faults, will

Tu, quid ego et populus mecum desideret, audi;
 Si fautoris eges aulaea manentis, et usque
 Sessuri, donec cantor, Vos plaudite, dicat: 155
 Aetatis cujusque notandi sunt tibi mores,
 Mobilibusque decor naturis dandus et annis.
 Reddere qui voces jam scit puer, et pede certo
 Signat humum; gestit paribus colludere, et iram

COMMENTARY.

will be to observe (for here the imitation cannot be too close) the well-judged practice of Homer.

Having thus considered the affair of *imitations* and shewn how *old characters*, and, to carry it still further, *old subjects*, may be successfully treated, he resumes the head of *characters*, and proceeds more fully [from l. 153 to 179] to recommend it as a point of principal concern in the drawing of them, to be well acquainted with the manners, agreeing to the several successive periods and stages of human life. And this with propriety: for, though he had given a hint to this purpose before,

*Maturusne senex, an adhuc florente juvenis
 Fervidus;*

yet, as it is a point of singular importance, and a regard to it, besides other distinctions, must be constantly had in the draught of every character, it well deserved a separate consideration.

III. These instructions, which, in some degree, respect all kinds of poetry, being dismissed; he now delivers some rules more peculiarly relative to the case of the *drama*. And, as the *misapplication of manners*, which

16 Q. HORATII FLACCI

Colligit ac ponit temere, et mutatur in horas. 160
 Inberbus juvenis, tandem custode remoto,
 Gaudet equis canibusque et aprici gramine campi;
 Cereus in vitium flecti, monitoribus asper,
 Utilem tardus provisor, prodigus aeris,
 Sublimis, cupidusque, et amata relinquere pernix.
 Conversis studiis, aetas animusque virilis
 Quaerit opes et amicitias, inservit honori;
 Commisisse cavet quod mox mutare laboret.
 Multa senem circumveniunt incommoda; vel quod
 Quaerit, et inventis miser abstinet, ac timet uti;
 Vel quod res omnis timide gelideque ministrat,
 Dilator, spe lentus, iners, pavidusque futuri;
 Difficilis, querulus, laudator temporis acti
 Se puero, castigat, censorque minorum.
 Multa ferunt anni venientes commoda secum, 175
 Multa recedentes adimunt: ne forte seniles
 Mandentur juveni partes, pueroque viriles.
 Semper in adjunctis aevoque morabimur aptis.
 Aut agitur res in scenis, aut acta refertur:

COMMENTARY.

which was the point he had been considering, was destructive of *probability*, this leads the poet, by a natural order, to censure some other species of misconduct, which have the *same effect*. He determines then, 1. [from l. 179 to 189] the case of *representation* and *recital*: or what it is, which renders some things more fit to be *acted* on the stage, others more fit to be *related* on it.

Next,

Segnius irritant animos demissa per aurem, 180
 Quam quae sunt oculis subjecta fidelibus, et quae
 Ipse sibi tradit spectator. non tamen intus
 Digna geri promes in scenam : multaque tolles
 Ex oculis, quae mox narret facundia praesens :
 Ne pueros coram populo Medea trucidet ; 185
 Aut humana palam coquat exta nefarius Atreus ;
 Aut in Avem Procne vertatur, Cadmus in anguem.
 Quodcunque ostendis mihi sic, incredulus odi.
 Neve minor, neu sit quinto productior actu
 Fabula, quae posci volt, et spectata reponi. 190
 Nec Deus intersit, nisi dignus vindice nodus
 Inciderit : nec quarta loqui persona laboret.
 Actoris partes chorus, officiumque virile
 Defendat : neu quid medios intercinat actus,
 Quod non proposito conducat et haereat apte. 195
 Ille bonis faveatque et consilietur amice,
 Et regat iratos, et amet pacare tumentis :
 Ille dapes laudet mensae brevis, ille salubrem

COMMENTARY.

Next, 2. In pursuance of the same point, viz. *probability* [to l. 193] he restrains the use of *machines*; and prescribes the number of *acts*, and of *persons*, to be introduced on the stage at the same time. And, 3. lastly, the *persona dramatis*, just mentioned, suggesting it to his thoughts, he takes occasion from thence to pass on to the *chorus* [from l. 193 to 202] whose double office it was, 1. To sustain the part of a *persona dramatis* in the acts; and, 2. To connect the *acts* with

18 Q. HORATII FLACCI

Justitiam, legesque, et apertis otia portis :
 Ille tegat commissa, Deosque precetur et oret, 200
 Ut redeat miseris, abeat fortuna superbis.
 Tibia non, ut nunc, orichalco, juncta, tubaeque
 Aemula ; sed tenuis, simplexque foramine paucò,
 Aspirare et adesse choris erat utilis, atque
 Nondum spissa nimis complere sedilia flatu : 205
 Quo sane populus numerabilis, utpote parvus
 Et frugi castusque verecundusque coibat.
 Postquam coepit agros extendere victor, et urbem
 Laxior amplecti murus, vinoque diurno
 Placari Genius festis inpune diebus ; 210
 Accessit numerisque modisque licentia major.
 Indoctus quid enim saperet liberque laborum,

COMMENTARY.

songs, persuading to good morals, and suitable to the subject. Further, tragedy being, originally, nothing more than a *chorus* or song, set to music, from which practice the harmony of the regular chorus in after-times had its rise, he takes occasion to digress [from l. 202 to 220] in explaining the simplicity and barbarity of the *old*, and the refinements of the *later*, music. The application of this account of the dramatic music to the case of the tragic chorus, together with a short glance at the other improvements of *numbers, style, &c.* necessarily connected with it, gives him the opportunity of going off easily into a subject of near affinity with this, *viz.* the *Roman satiric piece*; which was indeed a species of tragedy, but of so extraordinary a composition, as to require a set of rules, and

Rusticus urbano confusus, turpis honesto ?
 Sic priscæ motumque et luxuriem addidit arti
 Tibicen, traxitque vagus per pulpita vestem : 215
 Sic etiam fidibus voces crevere severis,
 Et tulit eloquium insolitum facundia praeceps ;
 Utiliumque sagax rerum, et divina futuri,
 Sortilegis non discrepuit sententia Delphis.
 Carmine qui tragico vilem certavit ob hircum,
 Mox etiam agrestis Satyros nudavit, et asper 221
 Incolumi gravitate jocum tentavit : eo quod
 Inlecebris erat et grata novitate morandus
 Spectator functusque sacris, et potus, et exlex.
 Verum ita risores, ita commendare dicacis 225

COMMENTARY.

and instructions, peculiar to itself. A point, in which they agreed, but which was greatly misunderstood or ill-observed by his countrymen, was the kind of verse or measure employed in them. This therefore, by a disposition of the most beautiful method, he reserves for a consideration by itself, having, first of all, delivered such rules, as seemed necessary about those points, in which they essentially differed. He explains then [from l. 220 to 225] the *use and end* of the *satires*, shewing them to be designed for the exhilaration of the rustic youth, on their solemn festivities, after the exhibition of the graver, tragic shews. But, 2. To convert, as far as was possible, what was thus a necessary sacrifice to the taste of the multitude into a tolerable entertainment for the better sort, he lays down [from l. 225 to 240] the exactest descrip-

20 Q. HORATII FLACCI

Conveniet Satyros, ita vertere seria ludo ;
 Ne quicunque Deus, quicunque adhibebitur heros
 Regali conspectus in auro nuper et ostro,
 Migret in obscuras humili sermone tabernas :
 Aut, dum vitat humum, nubes et inania captet.
 Effutire levis indigna tragoedia versus, 231
 Ut festis matrona moveri iussa diebus,
 Intererit Satyris paulum pudibunda protervis.
 Non ego inornata et dominantia nomina solum
 Verbaque, Pisones, Satyrorum scriptor amabo :
 Nec sic enitar tragico differre colori ;
 Ut nihil interfit, Davusne loquatur et audax
 Pythias emuncto lucrata Simone talentum,
 An custos famulusque Dei Silenus alumni.
 Ex noto fictum carmen sequar : ut sibi quisvis 240
 Speret idem ; fudet multum, frustra que laboret
 Ausus idem : tantum series juncturaque pollet :
 Tantum de medio sumtis accedit honoris.
 Silvis deducti caveant, me iudice, Fauni,
 Ne velut innati triviis, ac pene forenses, 245

COMMENTARY.

tion or idea of this sort of poem ; by means of which
 he instructs us in the due temperature and decorum
 of the satyric style. 3. Lastly, [from l. 240 to 251]
 he directs to the choice of proper subjects, and de-
 fines the just character of those principal and so un-
 common *personages* in this drama, the *satyrs* them-
 selves. This being premised, he considers, as was
 observed, what belongs in common to this with the
 regular

Aut nimium teneris juvenentur versibus umquam,
Aut imunda crepent ignominiosaque dicta.

Offenduntur enim, quibus est equus, et pater, et
res;

Nec, si quid fricti ciceris probat et nucis emtor,
Aequis accipiunt animis, donantve corona. 250

Syllaba longa brevi subjecta, vocatur Iambus,
Pes citus: unde etiam Trimetris adcrefcere jussit
Nomen Iambeis, cum senos redderet ictus

Primus ad extremum similis sibi: non ita pridem,
Tardior ut paulo graviorque veniret ad auris, 255

Spondeos stabilis in jura paterna recepit
Commodus et patiens: non ut de sede secunda
Cederet, aut quarta socialiter. Hic et in Acci

Nobilibus Trimetris apparet rarus, et Enni.
In scenam missus cum magno pondere versus, 260

Aut operae celeris nimium curaque carentis,
Aut ignoratae premit artis crimine turpi.

Non quivis videt immodulata poemata iudex:
Et data Romanis venia est indigna poetis.

COMMENTARY.

regular tragedy [from l. 251 to 275] the laws and use of the *iambic* foot; reproof, at the same time, the indolence or ill-taste of the Roman writers in this respect, and sending them for instruction to the Grecian models.

Having introduced his critique on the *stage-music*, and *satyric drama*, with some account of the rise and progress of each, the poet very properly concludes this

22 Q. HORATII FLACCI

Idcircone vager, scribamque licenter? ut omnis
 Visuros peccata putem mea; tutus et intra 266
 Spem veniae cantus? vitavi denique culpam,
 Non laudem merui. Vos exemplaria Graeca
 Nocturna versate manu, versate diurna.
 At vestri proavi Plautinos et numeros et 270
 Laudavere sales; nimium patienter utrumque
 (Ne dicam stulte) mirati: si modo ego et vos
 Scimus inurbanum lepido seponere dicto,
 Legitimumque sonum digitis callemus et aure.
 Ignotum tragicæ genus invenisse Camenæ 275
 Dicitur, et plaustris vexisse poemata Thespis
 Qui canerent agerentque, peruncti faecibus ora,
 Post hunc personæ pallæque repertor honestæ
 Aeschylus et modicis instravit pulpita tignis,
 Et docuit magnumque loqui, nitique cothurno.

COMMENTARY.

whole part [from l. 275 to 295] with a short, incidental history of the principal improvements of the *Greek tragedy and comedy*; which was artfully contrived to insinuate the defective state of the Roman drama, and to admonish his countrymen, how far they had gone, and what yet remained to complete it. And hence with the advantage of the easiest transition he slides into the last part of the epistle; the design of which, as hath been observed, was to reprove an *incorrectness and want of care* in the Roman writers. For, having just observed their *defect*, he goes on, in the remaining part of the epistle, to sum up the several causes, which seem to have produced it. And this

Successit vetus his Comoedia, non sine multa
 Laude : sed in vitium libertas excidit, et vim
 Dignam lege regi : lex est accepta ; chorusque
 Turpiter obticuit, sublato jure nocendi.

Nil intentatum nostri liquere poëtae : 285

Nec minimum meruere decus, vestigia Graeca
 Ausi deferere, et celebrare domestica facta,

Vel qui Praetextas, vel qui docuere Togatas.

Nec virtute foret clarisve potentius armis, 290

Quam lingua, Latium ; si non offenderet unum-

Quemque poëtarum limae labor et mora. Vos ô

Pompilius sanguis, carmen reprehendite, quod non

Multa dies et multa litura coërcuit, atque

Praefectum decies non castigavit ad unguem.

Ingenium misera quia fortunatius arte 295

Credit, et excludit sanos Helicone poëtas

Democritus ; bona pars non unguis ponere curat,

COMMENTARY.

this gives him the opportunity, under every head, of prescribing the proper remedy for each, and of inserting such further rules and precepts for good writing, as could not so properly come in before. The whole is managed with singular address, as will appear from looking over particulars.

P A R T III.

A CARE AND DILIGENCE IN WRITING RECOMMENDED.

I. [from l. 295 to l. 323] THE poet ridicules
 the false notion, into which the Romans had fallen,

24 Q. HORATII FLACCI

Non barbam : secreta petit loca, balnea vitat.
 Nanciscetur enim pretium nomenque poëtae,
 Si tribus Anticyris caput insanabile numquam 300
 Tonfori Licino commiserit. O ego laevus,
 Qui purgor bilem sub verni temporis horam ?
 Non alius faceret meliora poemata : verum
 Nil tanti est, ergo fungar vice cotis, acutum
 Reddere quae ferrum valet, exfors ipsa secandi. 305
 Munus et officium, nil scribens ipse, docebo ;
 Unde parentur opes : quid alat formetque poëtam ;
 Quid deceat, quid non ; quo virtus, quo ferat error,
 Scribendi recte, sapere est et principium et fons.
 Rem tibi Socraticae poterunt ostendere chartae :

COMMENTARY.

that *poetry* and *possession* were nearly the same thing : that nothing more was required in a poet, than some extravagant starts and fallies of thought ; that coolness and reflexion were inconsistent with his character, and that poetry was not to be scanned by the rules of sober sense. This they carried so far, as to affect the outward port and air of madness, and, upon the strength of that appearance, to set up for wits and poets. In opposition to this mistake, which was one great hindrance to critical correctness, he asserts *wisdom and good sense to be the source and principle of good writing* : for the attainment of which he prescribes, 1. [from l. 310 to 312] A careful study of the Socratic, that is, moral wisdom : and, 2. [from l. 312 to 318] A thorough acquaintance with human nature, *that great exemplar of manners*, as he finely calls it, or,
 in

Verbaque provisam rem non invita sequentur.
 Qui didicit patriae quid debeat, et quid amicis;
 Quo sit amore parens, quo frater amandus et
 hospes;
 Quod sit conscripti, quod iudicis officium; quas
 Partes in bellum missi ducis; ille profecto 315
 Reddere personae scit convenientia cuique.
 Respicere exemplar vitae morumque jubebo
 Doctum imitatore, et vivas hinc ducere voces.
 Interdum speciosa locis, morataque recte

COMMENTARY.

in other words, a wide, extensive view of real, practical life. The joint direction of these two, as means of acquiring moral knowledge, was perfectly necessary. For the former, when alone, is apt to grow abstracted and unaffecting: the latter, uninstructing and superficial. The philosopher talks without experience, and the man of the world without principles. United, they supply each other's defects; while the man of the world borrows so much of the philosopher, as to be able to adjust the several sentiments with precision and exactness; and the philosopher so much of the man of the world, as to copy the manners of life (which we can only do by experience) with truth and spirit. Both together furnish a thorough and complete comprehension of human life; which, manifesting itself in the *just* and *affecting*, forms that exquisite degree of perfection in the character of the dramatic poet; the want of which no warmth of genius can atone for, or excuse. Nay such is the force of this nice adjustment of *manners* [from l. 319
to

26 Q. HORATII FLACCI

Fabula, nullius veneris, sine pondere et arte, 320
 Valdius oblectat populum, meliusque moratur,
 Quam versus inopes rerum, nugaeque canorae.
 Graiis ingenium, Graiis dedit ore rotundo
 Musa loqui, praeter laudem, nullius avaris.
 Romani pueri longis rationibus assem 325
 Discunt in partis centum diducere. Dicas
 Filius Albin, si de quincunce remota est
 Uncia, quid superet, poterat dixisse, triens? Eu!
 Rem poteris servare tuam. Redit uncia: quid sit?
 Semis. An haec animos aerugo et cura peculi 330
 Cum semel inbuerit, speramus carmina fingi
 Posse linenda cedro, et levi servanda cupresso?
 Aut prodesse volunt, aut delectare poëtae;

COMMENTARY.

to 323] that, where it has remarkably prevailed, the success of a play hath sometimes been secured by it, without one single excellence or recommendation besides.

II. He shews [from l. 323 to 333] another cause of their incorrectness and want of success, in any degree, answering to that of the Greek writers, to have been the low and illiberal education of the Roman youth; who, while the Greeks were taught to open all their mind to glory, were cramped in their genius by the rest of gain, and, by the early infusion of such sordid principles, became unable to project a great design, or with any care and mastery to complete it.

III. A third impediment to their success in poetry [from l. 333 to 346] was their inattention to the en-

Aut simul et jocunda et idonea dicere vitae.

Quicquid praecipies, esto brevis: ut cito dicta 335

Percipiant animi dociles, teneantque fideles.

[Omne supervacuum pleno de pectore manat.]

Ficta voluptatis causa sint proxima veris:

Ne, quodcumque volet, poscat sibi fabula credi;

Neu pransae Lamiae vivum puerum extrahat alvo.

Centuriae seniorum agitant expertia frugis:

Celsi praetereunt austera poemata Ramnes.

Omne tulit punctum, qui miscuit utile dulci,

Lectorem delectando, pariterque monendo.

Hic meret, aera liber Sosis, hic et mare transit, 345

Et longum noto scriptori prorogat aevum.

COMMENTARY.

the scope and purpose of it, while they contented themselves with the attainment of one only of the two great ends, which are proposed by it. For the double design of poetry being to *instruct* and *please*, the full aim and glory of the art cannot be attained without uniting them both: that is, *instructing* so as to *please*, and *pleasing* so as to *instruct*. Under either head of *instruction* and *entertainment* the poet, with great address, insinuates the main art of each kind of writing, which consists, 1. in *instructive* or *didactic* poetry [from l. 335 to 338] in the *conciseness of the precepts*; and, 2. in works of *fancy* and *entertainment* [l. 338 to 341] in *probability of fiction*. But both these [l. 341 to 347] must concur in a just piece.

But here the bad poet objects the difficulty of the terms, imposed upon him, and that, if the critic looked

28 Q. HORATII FLACCI

Sunt delicta tamen, quibus ignovisse velimus :
Nam neque chorda sonum reddit, quem volt
manus et mens;

Postcentique gravem persaepe remittit acutum : 349
Nec semper feriet, quodcumque minabitur, arcus.
Verum ubi plura nitent in carmine, non ego paucis
Offendar maculis, quas aut incuria fudit,
Aut humana parum cavit natura, quid ergo est ?
Ut scriptor si peccat idem librarius usque,
Quamvis est inonitus, venia caret ; ut citharoedus
Ridetur, chorda qui semper oberrat eadem :
Sic mihi qui multum cessat, fit Choerilos ille,
Quem bis terve bonum, cum risu miror ; et idem
Indignor, quandoque bonus dormitat Homerus.
Verum operi longo fas est obrepere somnum. 360

COMMENTARY.

looked for all these requisites, and exacted them with rigour, it would be impossible to satisfy him : at least it was more likely to discourage, than quicken, as he proposed, the diligence of writers. To this the reply is [from l. 347 to 360] that he was not so severe, as to exact a faultless and perfect piece : that some inaccuracies and faults of less moment would escape the most cautious and guarded writer ; and that, as he should contemn a piece, that was generally bad, notwithstanding a few beauties, he could, on the contrary, admire a work, that was generally good, notwithstanding a few faults. Nay, he goes on [from l. 360 to 366] to observe in favour of writers, against their too rigorous censures, that what were often called

Ut pictura, poësis : erit quae, si propius stes,
 Te capiat magis ; et quaedam, si longius abstes :
 Haec amat obscurum ; volet haec sub luce videri,
 Judicis argutum quae non formidat acumen :
 Haec placuit semel ; haec decies repetita placebit.
 O major juvenum, quamvis et voce paterna
 Fingeris ad rectum, et per te sapis ; hoc tibi
 dictum
 Tolle memor : certis medium et tolerabile rebus
 Recte concedi : consultus juris, et actor
 Causarum mediocris ; abest virtute disertis 370
 Messallae, nec scit quantum Cascellius Aulus ;

COMMENTARY.

called faults, were really not so : that some parts of a poem ought to be less *shining*, or less *finished*, than others ; according to the light, they were placed in, or the distance, from which they were viewed ; and that, serving only to connect and lead to others of greater consequence, it was sufficient if they pleased once, or did not displease, provided that those others would please on every review. All this is said agreeably to *nature*, which does not allow every part of a subject to be equally susceptible of ornament ; and to the *end of poetry*, which cannot so well be attained, without an inequality. The allusions to painting, which the poet uses, give this truth the happiest illustration.

Having thus made all the reasonable allowances, which a writer could expect, he goes on to enforce the general instruction of this part, *viz.* a *diligence in writing*, by shewing [from l. 366 to 379] that a *mediocrity*,

30 Q. HORATII FLACCI

Sed tamen in pretio est : mediocribus esse poetis
Non homines, non Di, non concessere columnae.
Ut gratas inter mensas symphonia discors,
Et crassum unguentum, et Sardo cum melle pa-
paver

375

Offendunt ; poterat duci quia coena sine istis :
Sic animis natum inventumque poema juvandis,
Si paulum summo decessit, vergit ad inum.
Ludere qui nescit, campestribus abstinet armis ;
Indoctusque pilae, discive, trochive, quiescit ; 380
Ne spissae risum tollant impune coronae :
Qui nescit versus, tamen audet fingere. Quid ni ?

COMMENTARY.

Diocrity, however tolerable, or even commendable, it might be in other arts, would never be allowed in this: for which he assigns this very obvious and just reason ; that, as the main end of poetry is to *please*, if it did not reach that point (which it could not do by stopping ever so little on this side excellence) it was, like indifferent music, indifferent perfumes, or any other indifferent thing, which we can do without, and whose end should be to please, *offensive and disagreeable*, and for want of being very good, absolutely and insufferably bad. This reflexion leads him with great advantage [from l. 379 to 391] to the general conclusion in view, *viz.* that as none but excellent poetry will be allowed, it should be a warning to writers, how they engage in it without abilities ; or publish without severe and frequent correction. But to stimulate the poet, who, notwithstanding the al-

lowances

Liber et ingenuus; praesertim census equestrem
 Summam nummorum, vitioque remotus ab omni.
 Tu nihil invita dices faciesve Minerva: 385
 Id tibi iudicium est, ea mens, si quid tamen olim
 Scripseris, in Maeci descendat iudicis auris,
 Et patris, et nostras; nonumque prematur in an-
 num,
 Membranis intus positis. Delere licebit
 Quod non edideris: nescit vox missa reverti. 390
 Silvestris homines facer interpretesque Deorum
 Caedibus et victu foedo deterruit Orpheus;
 Dictus ob hoc lenire tigris rabidosque leones.

COMMENTARY.

lowances already made, might be something struck with this last reflexion, he flings out [from l. 391 to 408] into a fine encomium, on the dignity and excellence of the art itself, by recounting its ancient honours. This encomium, besides its great usefulness in invigorating the mind of the poet, has this further view, to recommend and revive, together with its honours, the office of ancient poetry; which was employed about the noblest and most important subjects; the sacred source, from whence those honours were derived.

From this transient view of the several species of poetry, terminating, as by a beautiful contrivance it is made to do, in the *Ode*, the order of his ideas carries him into some reflexions on the power of genius (which so essentially belongs to the Lyric Muse) and to settle thereby a point of criticism, much controverted among the antients, and on which a very considerable

32 Q. HORATII FLACCI

Dictus et Amphion, Thebanæ conditor arcis,
 Saxa movere sono testudinis, et prece blanda 395
 Ducere quo vellet. fuit hæc sapientia quondam,
 Publica privatis secernere, sacra profanis;
 Concubitu prohibere vago; dare jura maritis;
 Oppida moliri; leges incidere ligno.
 Sic honor et nomen divinis vatibus atque 400
 Carminibus venit. post hos insignis Homerus
 Tyrtæusque mares animos in Martia bella
 Versibus exacuit. dictæ per carmina fortes,
 Et vitæ monstrata via est, et gratia regum
 Pieriis tentata modis, ludusque repertus, 405
 Et longorum operum finis; ne forte pudori
 Sit tibi Musa lyræ solers, et cantor Apollo.
 Natura fieret laudabile carmen, an arte,

COMMENTARY.

considerable stress would apparently be laid. For, if after all, so much art and care and caution be demanded in poetry, what becomes of genius, in which alone it had been thought to consist? would the critic insinuate, that good poems can be the sole effect of art, and go so far, in opposition to the reigning prejudice, as to assert nature to be of no force at all? This objection, which would be apt to occur to the general scope and tenor of the epistle, as having turned principally on *art* and *rules* without insisting much on natural *energy*, the poet obviates at once [from L. 408 to 419] by reconciling two things which were held, it seems, incompatible, and demanding in the poet, besides the fire of real genius, all the labour and

Quaesitum est. Ego nec studium sine divite vena,
 Nec rude quid possit video ingenium: alterius sic
 Altera poscit opem res, et conjurat amice. 411
 Qui studet optatam cursu contingere metam,
 Multa tulit fecitque puer; sudavit et alfit;
 Abstinuit venere et vino. qui Pythia cantat
 Tibicen, didicit prius, extimuitque magistrum.
 Nec satis est dixisse, Ego mira poëmata pango:
 Occupet extremum scabies: mihi turpe relinqui est,
 Et, quod non didici, sane nescire fateri.
 Ut praeco, ad merces turbam qui cogit emendas;
 Ad sentatores jubet ad lucrum ire poëta 420
 Dives agris, dives positus in foenore nummis.
 Si vero est, unctum qui recte ponere possit,
 Et spondere levi pro paupere, et eripere artis

COMMENTARY.

and discipline of art. But there is one thing still wanting. The poet may be excellently formed by nature, and accomplished by art: but will his own judgment be a sufficient guide, without assistance from others? will not the partiality of an author for his own works sometimes prevail over the united force of rules and genius, unless he call in a fairer and less interested guide? Doubtless it will: and therefore the poet, with the utmost propriety, adds [from l. 419 to 450] as a necessary part of this instructive monition to his brother poets, some directions concerning the choice of a prudent and sincere friend, whose unbiassed sense might at all times correct the prejudices, indiscretions, and oversights, of the author,

34 Q. HORATII FLACCI

Litibus implicatum; mirabor, si sciet inter-
 Noscere mendacem verumque beatus amicum. 425
 Tu seu donaris seu quid donare voles cui;
 Nolito ad versus tibi factos ducere plenum
 Laetitiae; clamabit enim, Pulchre, bene, recte!
 Pallefcet; super his etiam stillabit amicis
 Ex oculis rorem; saliet; tundet pede terram. 430
 Ut qui conducti plorant in funere, dicunt
 Et faciunt propè plura dolentibus ex animo: sic
 Derisor verò plus laudatore movetur.
 Reges dicuntur multis urguere culullis,
 Et torquere mero quem perspexisse laborant 435
 An sit amicitia dignus. si carmina condes,
 Nunquam te fallant animi sub volpe latentes.
 Quintilio si quid recitares: Corrige sodes
 Hoc, aiebat, et hoc. melius te posse negares,
 Bis terque expertum frustra? delere jubebat, 440
 Et male ter natos incudi reddere versus.

COMMENTARY.

thor. And to impress this necessary care, with greater force, on the poet, he closes the whole with shewing the dreadful consequences of being imposed upon in so nice an affair; representing, in all the strength of colouring, the picture of a bad poet, infatuated, to a degree of madness, by a fond conceit of his own works, and exposed thereby (so important had been the service of timely advice) to the contempt and scorn of the public.

And now, an unity of design in this epistle, and the pertinent connection of its several parts, being, it is presumed,

ARS POETICA.

35

Si defendere delictum, quam vertere, malles;
Nullum ultra verbum, aut operam infumebat
inanem,

Quin sine rivali teque et tua solus amares.

Vir bonus et prudens versus reprehendet inertis;

Culpabit duros; incompitis adlinet atrum

Transverso calamo signum; ambitiosa recidet

Ornamenta; parum claris lucem dare coget;

Arguet ambigüe dictum; mutanda notabit;

Fiet Aristarchus; non dicet, Cur ego amicum

Offendam in nugis? Hae nugae seria ducent:

In mala derisum semel, exceptumque sinistre.

Ut mala quem scabies aut morbus regius urguet,

Aut fanaticus error, et iracunda Diana;

Vesantum tetigisse timent fugiuntque poetam,

Qui sapiunt: agitant pueri, incautique sequuntur.

Hic, dum sublimis versus ructatur, et errat,

Si veluti merulis intentus decidit auceps

COMMENTARY.

presumed, from this method of illustration, clearly and indisputably shewn, what must we think of the celebrated FRENCH interpreter of Horace, who, after a studied translation of this piece, supported by a long, elaborate commentary, minutely condescending to scrutinize each part, could yet perceive so little of its true form and character, as to give it for his summary judgment, in conclusion; "*Comme il [Horace] ne travailloit pas à cela de suite et qu'il ne gardoit d'autre ordre que celui des matieres que le hazard lui donnoit à lire et à examiner, il est arrivé delà qu' IL N'Y A AUCUNE*

D 2

METHODE

36 Q. HORATII FLACCI, ETC.

In puteum, foveamve ; licet, Succurrite, longum
 Clamet, io cives : non fit qui tollere curet. 466
 Si curet quis opem ferre, et demittere funem ;
 Qui scis, an prudens huc se projecerit, atque
 Servari nolit ? dicam : Sicutique poëtae
 Narrabo interitum. Deus immortalis haberi
 Dum cupit Empedocles, ardentem frigidus Aetnam
 Insiluit. fit jus, liceatque perire poëtis.
 Invitum qui servat, idem facit occidenti.
 Nec semel hoc fecit ; nec si retractus erit jam,
 Fiet homo, et ponet famosae mortis amorem.
 Nec satis adparet, cur versus factitet ; utrum 470
 Minxerit in patrios cineres, an triste bidental
 Moverit incestus : certe furit, ac velut urfus
 Objectos caveae valuit si frangere clathros,
 Indoctum doctumque fugat recitator acerbus.
 Quem vero arripuit, tenet, occiditque legendo, 475
 Non missura cutem, nisi plena cruoris, hirudo.

COMMENTARY.

METHODE NI AUCUNE LIAISON DE PARTIES DANS
 CE TRAITÉ, qui même n'a jamais été achevé, Horace
 n'ayant pas eu le tems d'y mettre la dernière main, ou, ce qui
 est plus vraisemblable, n'ayant pas voulu s'en donner la
 peine." [Mr. Dacier's Introd. Remarks to the Art of
 Poetry.] The softest thing that can be said of such a
 critic, is, that he well deserves the censure, he so justly
 applied to the great Scaliger, s'IL L'AVOIT BIEN
 ENTENDU, IL LUI AUROIT RENDU PLUS DE JUSTI-
 TICE, ET EN AUROIT PARLÉ PLUS MODESTEMENT.

NOTES

N O T E S

ON THE

A R T O F P O E T R Y.

D 3

2 3 4 5 6

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

38

N O T E S

ON THE

A R T O F P O E T R Y.

THE text of this epistle is given from Dr. BENTLEY's edition, except in some few places, of which the reader is advertised in the notes. These, that they might not break in too much on the thread of the Commentary, are here printed by themselves. For the rest, let me apologize with a great critic: *Nobis viri docti ignoscent, si hæc fusius: præsertim si cogitent, veri critici esse, non literulam alibi ejicere, alibi innocentem syllabam et quæ nunquam male merita de patria fuerit, per jocum et ludum trucidare et configere; verum recte de autoribus et rebus judicare, quod et solidæ et absolutæ eruditionis est.* HEINSIUS.

I. HUMANO CAPITI, &c.] It is seen, in the comment, with what elegance this first part [to l. 89] is made preparatory to the main subject, agreeably to the genius of the Epistle. But elegance, in good hands, always implies pro-

priety; as is the case here. For the critic's rules must be taken either, 1, from the *general* standing laws of composition; or, 2. from the peculiar ones, appropriated to the *kind*. Now the direction to be fetched from the former of these sources will of course *precede*, as well on account of its superior dignity, as that the mind itself delights to descend from *universals* to the consideration of *particulars*. Agreeably to this rule of nature, the poet, having to correct, in the Roman drama, these three points, 1. a misconduct in the disposition; 2. an abuse of language; and, 3. a disregard of the peculiar characters and *colourings* of its different species, hath chosen to do this on principles of universal nature; which, while they include the case of the drama, at the same time extend to poetic composition at large. These prefatory, universal observations being delivered, he then proceeds, with advantage, to the *second* source of his art, viz. the consideration of the laws and rules peculiar to the *kind*.

9. —PICTORIBUS ATQUE POETIS—QUID-LIBET AUDENDI SEMPER FUIT AEQUA P-TESTAS.] The *modern* painter and poet will observe that this aphorism comes from the mouth of an objector.

14. IN-

14. INCEPTIS GRAVIBUS, &c.] These preparatory observations concerning the laws of poetic composition at large have been thought to glance more *particularly* at the epic poetry: Which was not improper: For, 1. The *drama*, which he was about to criticise, had its rise and origin from the *epos*. Thus we are told by the great critic, that Homer was the first who *invented dramatic imitations*, μόνος—ὅτι μιμήσεις δραματικάς ἐποίησε. And to the same purpose Plato: ἔριξε μὲν τῶν καλῶν ἀπάντων τέτων τῶν τραγικῶν πρῶτος διδάσκαλος καὶ ἡγμένων γενέσθαι. [Ὅμηρος.] *De Rep.* l. x. Hence, as our noble critic observes, “There was no more left for tragedy to “do after him, than to erect a stage, and draw “his dialogues and characters into scenes; “turning in the same manner upon one principal action or event, with regard to place and “time, which was suitable to a real spectacle.” [*Characterist.* vol. i. p. 198.] 2. The several censures, here pointed at the epic, would bear still more directly against the tragic poem; it being more glaringly inconsistent with the genius of the *drama* to admit of foreign and digressive ornaments, than of the extended, episodical *epopœia*. For both these reasons it was altogether pertinent to the poet’s purpose, in a criticism on the *drama*, to expose the vicious practice of the *epic* models. Though, to preserve the unity of his

42 NOTES ON THE

his piece, and for the reason before given in note on l. 1. he hath artfully done this under the cover of *general criticism*.

19. SED NUNC NON ERAT HIS LOCUS.] If one was to apply this observation to our dramatic writings, I know of none which would afford pleasanter instances of the absurdity, here exposed, than the famous ORPHAN of Otway. Which, notwithstanding its real beauties, could hardly have taken so prodigiously, as it hath done, on our stage, if there were not somewhere a defect of *good taste* as well as of *good morals*.

23. DENIQUE SIT QUIDVIS: SIMPLEX DUNTAXIT ET UNUM.] Is it not strange that he, who delivered this rule in form, and, by his manner of delivering it, appears to have laid the greatest stress upon it, should be thought capable of paying no attention to it himself, in the conduct of this epistle?

25—28. BREVIS ESSE LABORO, OBSCURUS FIO: SECTANTEM LENIA NERVI DEFICIUNT ANIMIQUE: PROFESSUS GRANDIA TURGET: SERPIT HUMI TUTUS NIMIUM TIMIDUSQUE PROCELLAE.] If these characters were to be exemplified in our own poets, of reputation, the *first*, I suppose, might be justly applied to Donne; the

the *second*, to Parnell; the *third*, to Thomson; and the *fourth*, to Addison. As to the two following lines:

*Qui variare cupit rem prodigialiter unam,
Delphinum silvis adpingit, fluctibus aprum:*

they are applicable to so many of our poets, that, to keep the rest in countenance, I will but just mention Shakespeare himself; who, to enrich his scene with that *variety*, which his exuberant genius so largely supplied, hath deformed his best plays with these *prodigious* incongruities.

29. QUI VARIARE CUPIT REM PRODIGIALITER UNAM, &c.] Though I agree with M. Dacier that *prodigialiter* is here used in a good sense, yet the word is so happily chosen by our *curious speaker*, as to carry the mind to that fictitious monster, under which he had before allusively shadowed out the idea of absurd and inconsistent composition, in l. 1. The application, however, differs in this, that, whereas the monster, there painted, was intended to expose the extravagance of putting together *incongruous parts*, without any reference to a *whole*, this *prodigy* is designed to characterize a *whole*, but deformed by the ill-judged *position* of its *parts*. The former is like a monster, whose several members, as of right belonging to different animals, could, by no disposition, be made to constitute

stitute *one* consistent animal. The other, like a landscape, which hath no objects absolutely *irrelative*, or irreducible to a *whole*, but which a wrong position of the *parts* only renders *prodigious*. Send the *boar to the woods*; and the *dolphin to the waves*; and the painter might shew them both on the same canvass.

Each is a violation of the law of unity, and a real *monster*: the one, because it contains an assemblage of naturally *incoherent parts*; the other, because its parts, though in themselves *coherent*, are *misplaced*, and disjointed.

34. INFELIX OPERIS SUMMA: QUIA PONERE TOTUM NESCIET.] This observation is more peculiarly applicable to *dramatic* poetry, than to any other, an unity and integrity of action being of its very essence.—The poet illustrates his observation very happily in the case of *statuary*; but it holds of every other art, that hath a *whole* for its object. *Nicias*, the painter, used to say [a], “That the *subject* was to him, what the “fable is to the poet.” Which is just the sentiment of *Horace*, reversed. For by the *subject* is meant the whole of the painter’s plan, the *totum*, which it will be impossible for those to express, who lay out their pains so solicitously in finish-

[a] See *Victor. Comm. in Dem. Phaler.* p. 73. *Florent.* 1594.

ing single parts. Thus, to take an obvious example, the landkip-painter is to draw together, and form into *one* entire view, certain beautiful, or striking objects. This is his main care. It is not even essential to the merit of his piece, to labour, with extreme exactness, the *principal* constituent parts. But for the rest, a *shrub* or *flower*, a straggling *goat* or *sheep*, these may be touched very negligently. We have a great modern instance. Few painters have obliged us with *finer* scenes, or have possessed the art of combining *woods*, *lakes*, and *rocks*, into more agreeable pictures, than G. POUSSIN: Yet his *animals* are observed to be scarce worthy an ordinary artist. The use of these is *simply* to decorate the scene; and so their beauty depends, not on the truth and correctness of the *drawing*, but on the elegance of their *disposition* only. For, in a landkip, the eye carelessly glances over the smaller parts, and regards them only in reference to the surrounding objects. The painter's labour therefore is lost, or rather misemployed, to the prejudice of the *whole*, when it strives to finish, so minutely, *particular* objects. If some great masters have shewn themselves ambitious of this fame, the objects, they have laboured, have been always such, as are most considerable in themselves, and have, besides, an *effect* in illustrating and setting off the entire scenery. It is chiefly
in

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in this view, that Ruissdale's *waters*, and Claude Lorrain's *skies*, are so admirable.

40.—CUI LECTA POTENTER ERIT RES.]

Potenter, i. e. κατὰ δύναμιν, *Lambin*: which gives a pertinent sense, but without justifying the expression. The learned editor of Statius proposes to read *pudenter*, a word used by Horace on other occasions, and which suits the meaning of the place as well. A similar passage in the epistle to Augustus adds some weight to this conjecture ;

nec meus audet

REM tentare PUDOR, quam vires ferre recusent.

45. HOC AMET, HOC SPERNAT, PROMISSI CARMINIS AUCTOR—IN VERBIS ETIAM TENUIS CAUTUSQUE SERENDIS.] Dr. Bentley hath inverted the order of these two lines ; not merely, as I conceive, without sufficient reason, but in prejudice also to the scope and tenor of the poet's sense ; in which case only I allow myself to depart from his text. The whole precept, on poetical distribution, is delivered, as of importance :

[*Ordinis hæc virtus erit et venus, aut ego fallor.*]

And such indeed it is : for, 1. It respects no less than the constitution of a *whole*, i. e. the reduction of a subject into one entire, consistent plan,

plan, the most momentous and difficult of all the offices of *invention*, and which is more immediately addressed, in the high and sublime sense of the word, to the POET. 2. It is no trivial *whole*, which the Precept had in view, but, as the context shews, and as is further apparent from l. 150, where this topic is resumed, and treated more at large, the *epos* and the *drama*. With what propriety then is a rule of such dignity enforced by that strong emphatic conclusion,

Hoc amet, hoc spernat, promissi carminis auctor :

i. e. "Be this rule held sacred and inviolate by him, who hath projected and engaged in a work, deserving the appellation of a poem." Were the subject only the choice or invention of *words*, the solemnity of such an application must be ridiculous.

As for the construction, the commonest reader can find himself at no loss to defend it against the force of the Doctor's objections.

46. IN VERBIS ETIAM TENUIS, &c.] I have said, that these preparatory observations, concerning an *unity* of design, the *abuse of language*, and the different *colourings* of the several species of poetry, whilst they extend to poetic composition at large, more particularly respect the case of the *drama*. The *first* of these articles has been illustrated

trated in note on l. 34. The *last* will be considered in note, l. 73. I will here shew the same of the *second*, concerning the *abuse of words*. For, 1. the style of the drama representing real life, and demanding, on that account, a peculiar ease and familiarity in the language, the practice of coining *new* words must be more insufferable in *this*, than in any other species of poetry. The majesty of the epic will even sometimes require to be supported by this means, when the commonest ear would resent it, as downright affectation upon the stage. Hence the peculiar propriety of this rule to the dramatic writer,

In verbis etiam tenuis cautusque serendis.

2. Next, it is necessary to keep the tragic style, though condescending, in some sort, to the familiar cast of conversation, from sinking beneath the dignity of the personages, and the solemnity of the representation. Now no expedient can more happily effect this, than what the poet prescribes concerning the *position* and *derivation* of words. For thus, the language, without incurring the odium of absolutely *invented* terms, sustains itself in a becoming stateliness and reserve, and, whilst it seems to stoop to the level of conversation, artfully eludes the meanness of a trite, prosaic style.—There are wonderful instances of this management in the *Samson Agonistes*

nistes of Milton; the most artificial and highly finished, though for that reason, perhaps, the least popular and most neglected, of all the great poet's works.

47. DIXERIS EGREGIE, NOTUM SI CALLIDA VERBUM REDDIDERIT JUNCTURA NOVUM.—]

This direction, about *disposing* of old words in such a manner as that they shall have the grace of *new* ones, is among the finest in the whole poem. And because Shakespeare is he, of all our poets, who has most successfully practised this secret, it may not be amiss to illustrate the precept before us by examples taken from his writings.

But first it will be proper to explain the *precept* itself as given by Horace.

His critics seem not at all to have apprehended the force of it. Dacier and Sanadon, the two best of them, confine it merely to the formation of *compound words*; which, though *one* way in which this *callida junctura* shews itself, is by no means the whole of what the poet intended by it.

Their mistake arose from interpreting the word *junctura* too strictly. They suppose it to mean only the *putting together two words into one*; this being the most obvious idea we have of the *joining* of words. As if the most *literal* construction

of terms, according to their etymology, were always the most proper.

But Mr. Dacier has a reason of his own for confining the precept to this meaning. "The question, he says, is *de verbis ferendis*; and therefore this *junctura* must be explained of new words, properly so called, as compound epithets are; and not of the grace of novelty which single words seem to acquire from the art of disposing of them."

By which we understand, that the learned critic did not perceive the scope of his author; which was manifestly this. "The invention of new terms, says he, being a matter of much nicety, I had rather you would contrive to employ known words in such a way as to give them the effect of new ones. It is true, new words may sometimes be necessary: And if so," &c. Whence we see that the line,

In verbis etiam tenuis cautusque ferendis,
is not given here in form as the *general rule*, and the following line, as the *example*. On the other hand, the rule is just mentioned carelessly and in passing, while the poet is hastening to another consideration of more importance, and which he even *opposes* to the former. "Instead of making new words, you will do well to confine yourself merely to old ones." What-

ever

ever then be the meaning of *junctura*, it is clear we are not to explain it of such words as exemplify the rule *de verbis serendis*.

But *junctura* will be best interpreted by the *usage* of Horace together with the *context*; 1. The word occurs only once more in this poet, and that in this very Epistle. It is where he advises a conduct with regard to the *subject-matter* of a poem, analogous to this concerning the *language* of it.

Ex noto fictum carmen sequar—

— *tantum series juncturaque pollet.* l. 242.

Does he mean *the joining two subjects together* and combining them into *one*, so as that the *compound* subject shall be a *new* one? No such thing; “The subject, says he, shall be a *known*, an old one. Yet the *order, management, and contrivance*, shall be such as to give it the air of an original fiction.” Apply now this sense of *junctura* to words; and we are only told, that expression may be so *ordered* as to appear new, when the words, of which it is made up, are all known and common.

We have then the authority of the poet himself against the opinion of the French critic. But we have also the authority of his great imitator, or rather interpreter, Persius; who, speaking of the language of his satires, says, in allusion to this passage of Horace,

E 2

“*Verba*

“*Verba togæ sequeris, juncturâ callidus acri.*”

S. v. 14.

i. e. he took up with words of common and familiar use, but contrived to bring them into his style in such a manner as to give them the force, spirit, and energy, of satiric expression.”

2. Again: the context, as I observed, leads us to this meaning. The poet in l. 42. had been giving his opinion of the nature and effect of *method*, or orderly disposition in the conduct of a *fable*. The course of his ideas carries him to apply the observation to *words*; which he immediately does, only interposing l. 46. by way of introduction to it.

On the whole then *junctura* is a word of large and general import, and the same in *expression*, as *order or disposition*, in a *subject*. The poet would say, “Instead of framing new words, I recommend to you *any* kind of artful management by which you may be able to give a new air and cast to old ones.”

Having now got at the true meaning of the precept, let us see how well it may be exemplified in the practice of Shakespeare.

1. The first example of this *artful management*, if it were only in complaisance to former commentators,

mentators, shall be that of *compound epithets*; of which sort are,

High-fighted Tyranny J. C. A. II. S. 2.

A barren-spirited fellow A. IV. S. 1.

An arm-gaunt steed A. C. A. I. S. 6.

Flower-soft hands A. II. S. 3.

Lazy-pacing clouds R. J. A. II. S. 2.

and a thousand instances more in this poet. But this is a small part of his *craft*, as may be seen by what follows. For this end is attained,

2. *By another form of composition*; by compound *verbs* as well as compound *adjectives*.

To *candy* and *limn* are known words. The poet would express the contrary ideas, and he does it happily, by compounding them with our English negative *dis*,

— The hearts

That pantler'd me at heels, to whom I gave
Their wishes, to *discandy*, melt their sweets
On blossoming Cæsar— A. C. A. IV. S. 9.

That which is now a horse, ev'n with a thought
The rack *dislimns*, and makes it indistinct
As water is in water— A. C. A. IV. S. 10.

Though here we may observe, that for the readier acceptance of these compounds, he artfully subjoins the explanation.

E 3

3. By

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3. By a liberty he takes of converting *substantives* into *verbs*;

A glafs that *featur'd* them. Cymb. A. i. S. 1.

— Simon's weeping

Did *scandal* many a holy tear— A. III. S. 4.

Great griefs, I fee, *medicine* the lefs. A. iv. S. 5.

—that kifs

I carried from thee, Dear; and my true lip

Hath *virgin'd* it e'er fince— Cor. A. v. S. 3.

Or *verbs* into *substantives*;

—Then began

A ftop i' th' chafer, a *Retire*—Cymb. A. v. S. 2.

— take

No ftricter *render* of me—

A. v. S. 3.

— handkerchief

Still waving, as the fits and *flirs* of's mind

Could beft exprefs—

Cymb. A. i. S. 5.

— Sextus Pompeius

Hath giv'n the *dare* to Cæfar— A. C. A. i. S. 3.

4. By ufing *active* verbs neutrally.

— He hath fought to-day

As if a god in hate of mankind had

Defstroy'd, in fuch a fhape— A. C. A. iv. S. 6.

It is the bloody bufinefs, that *informs*

Thus to mine eyes—

Macb. A. II. S. 2.

And *neutral* verbs actively.

— never man

Sigh'd truer breath; but that I fee thee here,

Thou

Thou noble thing! more *dances* my rapt heart
 Than when I first my wedded mistress saw
 Bestride my threshold— Cor. A. iv. S. 4.

— like smiling Cupids,
 With divers-colour'd fans, whose wind did seem
 To glow the delicate cheeks which they did cool—
 A. C. A. II. S. 3.

5. By converting *Adjectives* into Substantives.

— I do not think
 So fair an *outward* and such stuff within
 Endows a man but him— Cymb. A. I. S. 1.

6. By converting *Participles* into Substantives.

He would have well become this place, and grac'd
 The *thankings* of a King— Cymb. A. v. S. 5.
 The herbs, that have in them cold dew o' th' night
 Are *strewings* fitt'ft for Graves— A. iv. S. 5.

— Then was I as a tree
 Whose boughs did bend with fruit. But, in one
 night,
 A storm, or robbery, call it what you will,
 Shook down my mellow *hangings* —

Cymb. A. III. S. 3.

— Comes in my father,
 And like the tyrannous *breathing* of the North
 Shakes all our Buds from blowing —

Cymb. A. I. S. 5.

Which last instance I the rather give for the sake of proposing an emendation, which I think restores this fine passage to its integrity. Before the late edition of Shakspeare it stood thus,

And like the tyrannous breathing of the North
Shakes all our Buds from *growing*—

But the sagacious Editor saw that this reading was corrupt, and therefore altered the last word, *growing*, for unanswerable reasons, into *blowing*. See Mr. W.'s note upon the place. This slight change gives propriety and beauty to the passage, which before had no sort of meaning. Yet still all is not quite right. For, as the great Critic himself observes, "*Breathing* is not a very proper word to express the rage and bluster of the north wind." Besides, one does not see how the *shaking* of these Buds is properly assigned as the cause of their not blowing. The wind might shake off the *blossoms* of a fruit-tree, i. e. the Buds when they were *full-blown*; but so long as the blossom lies folded up in the Bud, it seems secure from shaking. At least the *shaking* is not the *immediate* cause of the effect, spoken of; it is simply the *cold* of the north-wind that closes the Bud and keeps it from *blowing*. I am therefore tempted to propose another alteration of the text, and to read thus,

And like the tyrannous Breathing of the North
Shuts all our Buds from blowing—

If this correction be allowed, every thing is perfectly right. It is properly the *breathing*, the cold breath of the North, that shuts up the Buds when they are on the point of blowing. Whence the epithet *tyrannous* will be understood not as implying the idea of *blustering* (an idea indeed necessary if we retain the word *shakes*) but simply of *cruel*, the *tyranny* of this wind consisting in imprisoning the flower in its Bud, and denying it the liberty of coming out in *Blossom*. The application too of this comparison, which required the change of *growing* into *blowing*, seems also to require the present alteration of *shakes*. For there was no manner of violence in *the father's* coming in upon the lovers. All the effect was, that his presence *restrained* them from that interchange of tender words, which was going to take place between them.

Thus far I had written in the last edition of these notes, and I, now, see no cause to doubt the *general* truth and propriety of this emendation. Only it occurs to me that, instead of *SHUTS*, the poet's own word might, perhaps, be *CHECKS*; as not only being more like in *sound* to the word *shakes*; but as coming nearer to the

traces

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traces of the letters. Besides, *CHECKS* gives the precise idea we should naturally look for, whether we regard the integrity of the *figure*—*tyrannous—checks*—, or the *thing* illustrated by it, viz. the abrupt coming in of the father, which was properly a *check* upon the lovers. Lastly, the expression is mended by this reading; for, though we may be allowed to say *shuts from blowing*, yet *checks from blowing*, is easier and better English.

But to return to other instances of the poet's artifice in the management of *known* words. An apparent novelty is sometimes affected.

7. By turning *Participles* into Adverbs—

— *tremblingly* she stood

And on the sudden dropt— A. C. A. v. S. 5.
(One remembers the fine use Mr. Pope has made of this word in,

Or touch, if *tremblingly* alive all o'er—)

— But his flaw'd heart,

Alack, too weak the conflict to support,

'Twixt two extremes of passion, joy and grief,

Burst *smilingly*— Lear, A. v. S. 8.

8. By *figurative terms*, i. e. by such terms as though common in the *plain*, are unusual in the figurative application.

—This

— This common body

Like to a vagabond flag, upon the stream,
Goes to, and back, *lacquying* the varying tide.

A. C. A. I. S. 5.

— When snow the pasture *sheets*. ib.

To this head may be referred those innumerable terms in Shakespeare which surprize us by their novelty; and which surprize us generally, on account of his preferring the *specific* idea to the *general* in the *subjects* of his metaphors, and the *circumstances* of his description; an excellence in poetical expression which cannot be sufficiently studied. The examples are too frequent, and the thing itself too well understood, to make it necessary to enlarge on this article.

9. By *plain words*, i. e. such as are common in the figurative, uncommon in the literal acceptation.

Disasters vail'd the sun— Ham. A. I. S. 1.
See the note on the place.

Th' *extravagant* and erring spirit hies
To his confine— ib.

— Can't such things be
And *overcome* us, like a summer's cloud,
Without our special wonder? —

Macb. A. III. S. 5.

10. By

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10. By *transposition of words*—*unauthorized use of terms*—and *ungrammatical construction*. Instances in all his plays, *passim*.

11. By *foreign idioms*. It is true these are not frequent in Shakespear. Yet some Latinisms, and even Grecisms we have. As

Quenched of hope — Cymb. A. v. S. 5.

And the like. But, which is more remarkable, and served his purpose just as well, the writers of that time had so *latinized* the English language, that the pure *English* Idiom, which Shakespear generally follows, has all the air of *novelty* which other writers are used to affect by a foreign phraseology.

The reader sees, it were easy to extend this list of Shakespear's arts in the *callida junctura* much farther. But I intended only a specimen of them; so much as might serve to illustrate the rule of Horace.

It is enough, that we have now a perfect apprehension of what is meant by *CALLIDA JUNCTURA*; and that it is, in effect, but another word for *licentious expression*: the use of which is, as Quintilian well expresses it, "*Ut quotidiani et semper eodem modo formati sermonis fastidium levet, et nos à vulgari dicendi genere defendat.*" In short, the articles here enumerated,

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rated, are but so many ways of departing from the usual and simpler forms of speech, without neglecting too much the grace of ease and perspicuity; in which well-tempered licence, one of the greatest charms of all poetry, but especially of Shakespeare's poetry, consists; not that he was always and every where so happy, as in the instances given above. His expression sometimes, and by the very means here exemplified, becomes *hard, obscure, and unnatural*. This is the extreme on the other side. But in general, we may say, that he hath either followed the direction of Horace very ably, or hath hit upon his rule very happily.

We are not perhaps to expect the same ability, or good fortune, from others. *Novelty* is a charm which nothing can excuse the want of, in works of entertainment. And the necessity of preventing the tedium arising from *hacknied expression* is so instant, that those who are neither capable of prescribing to themselves this rule of the *callida junctura*, or of following it when prescribed by others, are yet inclined to ape it by some spurious contrivance; which being flight in itself will soon become liable to excess, and ridiculous by its absurdity. I have a remarkable instance in view, with which the reader will not be displeased that I conclude this long note.

About

About the middle of the last century, one of the most common of these mimic efforts was the endless multiplication of *epithets*; which soon made their poetry at once both stiff and nerveless. When frequent and excessive use had made this expedient ridiculous as well as cheap, they tried another, its very opposite, *the rejection of all epithets*; and so of languid poetry, made rigid prose. This too had its day. A dramatic poet of that time has exposed these opposite follies with much humour. A character of sense and pleasantry is made to interrogate a poetaster in the following manner:

GOLDSWORTH.

Master CAPERWIT, before you read, pray tell me, Have your verses any ADJECTIVES?

CAPERWIT.

Adjectives! Would you have a poem without Adjectives? They are the flow'rs, the grace of all our language;

A well-chosen Epithete doth give new Soule
To fainting Poesie; and makes everye verse
A Bribe. With adjectives we baite our lines,
When we do fish for Gentlewomen's loves,
And with their sweetness catch the nibbling ear
Of amorous Ladies: With the music of
These ravishing Nouns, we charm the filken tribe,

I

And

ART OF POETRY. 63

And make the Gallant melt with apprehension
Of the rare word : I will maintain 't (against
A bundle of Grammarians) in Poetry
The Substantive itself cannot subsist
Without an Adjective.

GOLDSWORTH.

But for all that,
These words would sound more full, methinks,
that are not
So larded : and, if I might counsel you,
You should compose a Sonnet, cleane without
them.

A row of stately SUBSTANTIVES would march,
Like Switzers, and bear all the field before them;
Carry their weight, shew fair, like DEEDS en-
roll'd;

Not WRITS, that are first made, and after fill'd :
Thence first came up the title of BLANK verse
You know, Sir, what *Blank* signifies? When the
Sense

First fram'd, is tied with Adjectives, like Points,
And could not hold together without wedges.

Hang't, 'tis Pedanticke, vulgar Poetry.

Let children, when they versifye, stick here
And there these pidling words, for want of matter;
POETS write masculine numbers.

CAPERWIT.

CAPERWIT.

You have given me a pretty hint: 'Tis NEW.
I will bestow these verses on my footman;
They'll serve a Chambermaid —

SHIRLEY's *Chances, or Love in a Maze.*

54. CÆCILIO PLAUTOQUE DABIT ROMANUS,
ADEMPTUM VIRGILIO VARIOQUE?] The
question is but reasonable. Yet the answer will
not be to the satisfaction of him that puts it.
This humour, we may observe, holds here in
England, as it did formerly at Rome; and will,
I suppose, hold every-where, under the same cir-
cumstances. Cæcilius and Plautus were allowed
to coin, but not Virgil and Varius. The same
indulgence our authors had at the restoration of
letters; but it is denied to our present writers.
The reason is plainly this. While arts are re-
fining or reviving, the greater part are forced,
and all are content, to be learners. When they
are grown to their usual height, all affect to be
teachers. With this affectation, a certain envy,
as the poet observes,

— cur adquirere pauca,

Si possum, invidior —

insinuates itself; which is for restraining the
privileges of writers, to all of whom every reader

is

is now become a rival. Whereas men, under the first character of *learners*, are glad to encourage every thing that makes for their instruction.

But, whatever offence may be taken at this practice, good writers, as they safely may, should *dare* to venture upon it. A perfect language is a chimæra. In every state of it there will frequently be occasion, sometimes a necessity, to hazard a *new* word. And let not a great genius be discouraged, by the fastidious delicacy of his age, from a sober use of this privilege. Let him, as the poet directs,

Command *old* words, that long have slept, to wake,
Words, that wise BACON, or brave RALEGH spake;
Or bid the *new* be English ages hence,
For USE will father what's begot by SENSE.

This too was the constant language of ancient criticism. "Audendum tamen; namque, ut ait Cicero, etiam quæ primò dura visa sunt, usu molliuntur." *Quintil.* l. i. c. 5.

70. MULTA RENASCENTUR, QUAE JAM
CECIDERE.] This *revival* of *old* words is one of those *niceties* in composition, not to be attempted by any but great masters. It may be done two ways; 1. by restoring such terms, as are grown entirely obsolete; or, 2. by selecting out of

Vol. I. F those,

those, which have still a currency, and are not quite laid aside, such as are most forcible and expressive. For so I understand a passage in Cicero, who urges this double use of old words, as an argument, to his orator, for the diligent study of the old Latin writers. His words are these: *Loquendi elegantia, quamquam expolitur scientiâ literarum, tamen augetur legendis oratoribus [veteribus] et poetis: sunt enim illi veteres, qui ornare nondum poterant ea, quae dicebant, omnes prope præclare locuti—Neque tamen erit utendum verbis iis, quibus jam consuetudo nostra non utitur, nisi quando ornandi causâ, parçè, quod ostendam; sed usitatis ita poterit uti, lectissimis ut utatur is, qui in veteribus erit scriptis studiosè et multum volutatus.* [De Orat. l. iii. c. 10.] These choice words amongst such as are still in use, I take to be those which are employed by the old writers in some peculiarly strong and energetic sense, yet so as with advantage to be copied by the moderns, without appearing barbarous or affected. [See Hor. lib. II. ep. ii. 115.] And therefore, by the way, of our finding such words in the old writers of every language, may be this. When ideas are new to us, they strike us most forcibly; and we endeavour to express, not our sense only, but our sensations, in the terms we use to explain them. The passion of wonder, which philosophy would cure us of, is of singular use

in

in raising the conception, and strengthening the expression of poets. And such is always the condition of old writers, when the arts are reviving, or but beginning to refine. The other use of old terms, *i. e.* when become *obsolete*, he says, must be made *parcè*, more sparingly. The contrary would, in oratory, be insufferable affectation. The rule holds in poetry, but with greater latitude; for, as he observes in another place, and the reason of the thing speaks, *hæc sunt poetarum licentiæ liberiora.* [De Or. iii. 38.] But the elegance of the style, we are told, is increased both ways. The reason is, according to Quintilian (who was perfectly of Cicero's mind in this matter. See l. x. c. 1.) *Verba à vetustate repetita afferunt orationi majestatem aliquam non sine delectatione; nam et auctoritatem antiquitatis habent; et, quia intermissa sunt, gratiam novitati similem parant.* [Lib. i. c. 6. sub fin.] But this is not all: The riches of a language are actually increased by retaining its old words; and besides, they have often a greater real weight and dignity, than those of a more fashionable cast, which succeed to them. This needs no proof to such as are versed in the earlier writings in *any* language. A very capable judge hath observed it in regard of the most admired modern one; *Nous avons tellement laissé ce qui étoit au viel François, que nous avons laissé quant et quant*

la plus part de ce qu'il avoit de bon. [Trait. préparatif à l'Apol. pour Herod. l. i. c. 28.] Or, if the reader requires a more decisive testimony, let him take it in the words of that curious speaker, Fenelon. *Nôtre langue manque d'un grand nombre de mots et de phrases. Il me semble même qu'on l'a genée et appauvrie depuis environ cent ans en voulant la purifier. Il est vrai qu'elle étoit encore un peu informe et trop verbeuse. Mais le vieux langage se fait regretter, quand nous le retrouvons dans MAROT, dans AMIOT, dans le Cardinal d'OSSAT, dans les ouvrages les plus enjoués, et dans les plus sérieux. Il y avoit je ne sçai quoi de court, de naïf, de vif, et de passionné.* [Reflex. sur la Rhétorique, Amst. 1733, p. 4.] From these testimonies we learn the extreme value, which these masters of composition set upon their old writers; and as the reason of the thing justifies their opinions, we may further see the important use of some late attempts to restore a better knowledge of our *own*. Which I observe with pleasure, as the growing prevalency of a very different humour, first catch'd, as it should seem, from our commerce with the French models, and countenanced by the too scrupulous delicacy of some good writers amongst ourselves, had gone for towards unnerving the noblest in modern language, and effeminating the public taste. This was not a little forwarded, by what
generally

generally makes its appearance at the same time, a kind of feminine curiosity in the choice of words; cautiously avoiding and reprobating all such (which were not seldom the most expressive) as had been prophaned by a too vulgar use, or had suffered the touch of some other accidental taint. This ran us into periphrases and general expression; the peculiar bane of every polished language. Whereas the rhetorician's judgment here again should direct us: *Omnia verba (exceptis paucis parum verecundis) sunt alicubi optima; nam et humilibus interim et vulgaribus est opus, et quæ cultiore in parte videntur sordida, ubi res poscit, propriè dicuntur.* Which seems borrowed from Dionysius of Halicarnassus [περ. συνθεσ. § xii.] εὐδὲν ἔττω ταπεινὸν, ἢ ῥυπαρὸν, ἢ μιαρὸν, ἢ ἄλλην τινὰ δυσχέρειαν ἔχον ἔσσεσθαι φημι λόγῳ μόνον, ὃ σημαίνειται τι σῶμα ἢ πρᾶγμα, ὃ μηδεμίαν ἔχει χῶραν ἐπιηδεῖαν ἐν λόγοις. However, those two causes, “The rejection of old words, as barbarous, and of many modern ones, as unpolite,” had so exhausted the strength and stores of our language, that, as I observed, it was high time for some master-hand to interpose, and send us for supplies to our old poets; which, there is the highest authority for saying, no one ever despised, but for a reason, not very consistent with his credit to avow: *rudem enim esse omnino*

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in nostris pœtis aut inertissimæ segnitiae est aut fastidii delicatissima. [Cic. de Fin, l. i. c. 2.]

72. — SI VOLET USUS, &c.] *Consuetudo certissima loquendi magistra; utendumque planè sermone, ut nummo, qui publica forma est.* [Quintil. l. i. c. 6.] imitated from Horace. In *Lucian* too, we find it one of the charges brought against the pedant, *Lexiphanes*, that he clipped the standard COIN of the Greek language—*σπέρην ποίεμενος ὡς δὴ τι μέγα ὄν, εἴτι ξενίζοι καὶ τὸ καθεστὸς ΝΟΜΙΣΜΑ τῆς φωνῆς παρανόητοι.* (c. 20.)

73. RES GESTÆ, &c.] The purport of these lines [from l. 73 to 86] and their connexion with what follows, hath not been fully seen. They would express this general proposition, “That the several kinds of poetry essentially differ from each other, as may be gathered, not solely from their different subjects, but their different measures; which good sense, and an attention to the peculiar natures of each, instructed the great inventors and masters of them to employ.” The use made of this proposition is to infer, “that therefore the like attention should be had to the different species of the same kind of poetry [l. 89, &c.] as in the case of tragedy and comedy (to which the
“ appli-

“application is made), whose peculiar differences
 “and correspondencies, “as resulting from the
 “natures of each, should, in agreement to the
 “universal law of *decorum*, be exactly known
 “and diligently observed by the poet.”

Singula quæque locum teneant sortita decentem, l. 92.

But there is a further propriety in this enumeration of the several kinds of poetry, as addressed to the dramatic writer. He is not only to study, for the purposes here explained, the characteristic differences of either species of the drama: He must further be knowing in the other *kinds* of poetry, so as to be able, as the nature of his work shall demand, to adopt the genius of each, in its turn, and to transfer the graces of universal poetry into the drama. Thus, to follow the division here laid down, there will sometimes be occasion for the pomp and high *colouring* of the EPIC narration; sometimes for the plaintive softness and passionate inconnexion of the ELEGY: and the chorus, if characterized in the ancient manner, must catch the fiery, inraptured spirit of the ODE.

Descriptas servare vices operumque colores,

Cur ego, si nequeo ignoroque, POETA salutor?

Hence is seen the truth of that remark, which there hath been more than once occasion to make, “That, however general these prefatory

“instructions may appear, they more especially
 “respect the case of the *drama*.”

90. INDIGNATUR ITEM, &c.—COENA THYESTAE.] *Il met le souper de Thyeste pour toutes sortes de tragedies*, says M. Dacier; but why this subject was singled out, as the representative of the rest, is not explained by him. We may be sure, it was not taken up at random. The reason was, that the Thyestes of Ennius was peculiarly chargeable with the fault, here censured; as is plain from a curious passage in the *Orator*; where Cicero, speaking of the loose numbers of certain poets, observes this, in particular, of the tragedy of Thyestes, *Similia sunt quædam apud nostros: velut in Thyeste*,

*Quemnam te esse dicam? qui tardâ in senectute,
 et quæ sequuntur: quæ, nisi cum tibicen accesserit,*
 ORATIONI SUNT SOLUTÆ SIMILLIMA: which character exactly agrees to *this* of Horace, wherein the language of that play is censured, as flat and prosaic, and hardly rising above the level of ordinary conversation in comedy. This allusion to a particular play, written by one of their best poets, and frequently exhibited on the Roman stage, gives great force and spirit to the precept, at the same time that it exemplifies it in the happiest manner. It seems further probable to
 me,

me, that the poet also designed an indirect compliment to *Varius*, whose *Thyestes*, we are told, [*Quintil. l. x. c. 1.*] *was not inferior to any tragedy of the Greeks*. This double intention of these lines well suited the poet's general aim, which is seen through all his critical works, of beating down the excessive admiration of the old poets, and of asserting the just honours of the modern. It may further be observed, that the critics have not felt the force of the words *exponi* and *narrari* in this precept. They are admirably chosen to express the two faults condemned: the first implying a kind of pomp and ostentation in the language, which is therefore improper for the low subjects of comedy: and the latter, as I have hinted, a flat, prosaic expression, not above the cast of a common *narrative*, and therefore equally unfit for tragedy. Nothing can be more rambling than the comment of *Heinsius* and *Dacier* on this last word,

94. IRATUSQUE CHREMES TUMIDO DILIGAT ORRE: ET TRAGICUS PLERUMQUE DOLET SERMONE PEDESTRI.] It may not be amiss to open a little more particularly the grounds of this criticism; which may best be done by a commentary on the following lines of the poet:

Format

*Format enim natura prius nos intus ad omnem
 Fortunarum habitum; juvat aut impellit ad iram;
 Aut ad humum mœrore gravi deducit et angit?
 Post effert animi motus interprete lingua.*

To draw after the life, in any given conjuncture, the poet must recollect (which may easily be done by consulting with his own conscious experience) that *peculiar disposition* of mind, into which the speaker is, of necessity, carried by the circumstances of his situation. And the *sentiments*, which give the image of this peculiar disposition, are the genuine lineaments of the character intended.

But the *truth* of sentiment may be hurt or effaced by incongruous language, just as the exactest lineaments of a portrait are often disguised or lost under a vicious colouring. To *paint* then as well as draw after the truth, it is requisite that a further regard be had to the *expression*. Which again is no great difficulty for the artist, the same common nature holding the torch to him, as before. For in entering into ourselves we find, that as the mind, in any supposed situation, gives birth to a *certain* set of conceptions and sentiments, correspondent to its true state, and expressive of it: so, by attending to the *language*, in which those sentiments ordinarily manifest themselves, we easily perceive they take *one* style or manner of expression preferably

preferably to every other. For *expression*, where false art is not employed to distort it, gives the just image of our *sentiments*; just as *these*, when nature is not suppressed or counteracted, are ever the faithful representatives of the *manners*. They result, like the famous *Simulacra* of Epicurus, as by a secret destination, from their *original forms*; and are, *each*, the perfect copies of *other*. All which will be clearly understood by applying these general observations to the instances in view.

The passion of ANGER rouses all the native fire and energy of the soul. In this disorder, and, as it were, insurrection of the mental powers, our sentiments are strong and vigorous; nature prompting us to liberal and lofty conceptions of ourselves, and a superior disdainful regard of others. This again determines the *genius* of our language, which, to conform to such sentiments, must be bold and animated; breaking out into forcible imagery, and swelling in all the pomp of sounding epithets and violent figures. And this even amidst the humbler concerns of private and inferior fortunes:

Iratusque Chremes TUMIDO DILITIGAT ORE.

In the passion of GRIEF, on the contrary, the reverse of this takes place. For the mind, oppressed and weighed down by its sorrows, sinks
into

into a weak and timorous despondency; inclining us to submit, almost without resistance, to the incumbent affliction; or, if we struggle at all with it, it is only to ease the labouring heart by putting forth some fruitless sighs and ineffectual complainings. Thus we find it represented by those perfect masters of simple nature, the Greek tragedians. So far are their sorrowing personages from entertaining any vigorous thoughts or manly resolutions, that they constantly languish into sad repinings at their present, and trembling apprehensions of future, misery.

When these sentiments come to express themselves in *words*, what can they be but the plainest and simplest which the language of the complainant furnishes? Such negligence, or more properly such dejection, of sorrow disposes the speaker to take up with terms as humble as his fortune. His feeble conception is not only unapt, or unable to look out for fine words, and painted phrases; but, if chance throw them in his way, he even rejects them as trappings of another condition, and which serve only to upbraid his present wretchedness. The pomp of numbers, and pride of *poetic* expression, are so little his care, that it is well if he even trouble himself to observe the ordinary exactness of *mere*
prose

prose [a]. And this even where the height of rank and importance of affairs conspire to elevate the mind to more state and dignity.

*Et tragicus plerumque DOLET SERMONE
PEDESTRI.*

Thus far the dramatic writer may inform himself by entering into his own *consciousness*, and observing the sure dictates of experience. For what concerns the successful application of this rule in *practice*, every thing, as is remarked below, [on l. 102] must depend on the constitution of his own mind; which yet may be much assisted by the diligent study of those writers who excel most in this way: in which class all agree to give the palm to EURIPIDES.

But here it may not be improper to obviate a common mistake that seems to have arisen from the too strict interpretation of the poet's rule. *Tragic characters*, he says, *will generally express their sorrows in a prosaic language*. From this just observation, hastily considered and compared with the absurd practice of some writers, it hath been concluded, That what we call *pure poetry*, the essence of which consists in bold figures and a lively imagery, hath no place on the stage.

[a] The reader may see a fine speech in the *Cyrcædia* of Xenophon [l. iv.] where not so much as this is observed.

It

It may not be sufficient to oppose to this notion the *practice* of the best poets, ancient and modern; for the question recurs, how far that practice is to be justified on the principles of good criticism and common sense. To come then to the *reason of the thing*.

The capital rule in this matter is,

Reddere personæ—convenientia cuique.

But to do this, the *situation* of the persons and the various *passions* resulting from such situation, must be well considered. Each of these has a *character* or turn of thinking peculiar to itself. But *all* agree in this property, that they occupy the whole attention of the speaker, and are perpetually offering to his mind a set of pictures or images, suitable to his state, and expressive of it. In these the tragic character of every denomination loves to indulge; as we may see by looking no farther than on what passes before us in common life, where persons, under the influence of any passion, are more eloquent, and have a greater quickness at allusion and imagery, than at other times. So that to take from the speaker this privilege of representing such pictures or images, is so far from consulting Nature, that it is, in effect, to overlook or reject one of her plainest lessons.

It is true, if *one* character is busied in running after the images which Nature throws in the way only of some *other*, or if, in representing such images as are proper to the character, the imagination is taken up in tracing minute resemblances, and amusing itself with circumstances that have no relation to the case in hand, then indeed the censure of these critics is well applied. It may be *fine poetry*, if you will, but very bad *dramatic writing*. But let the imagery be ever so great or splendid, if it be such only as the governing passion loves to conceive and paint, and if it be no further dilated on, and with no greater solicitude and curiosity, than the natural working of the passion demands, the drama is so far from rejecting such poetry, that it glories in it, as what is most essential to its true end and design.

Ille per extensum funem mihi posse videtur

Ire poeta, meum qui pectus inaniter angit,

Inritat, mulcet, falsis terroribus implet,

Ut magus——

An office, which the dramatic poet hath no means of sustaining but by that strong painting and forcible imagery, above described.

What seems to have given a colour to the opposite opinion, is the faulty practice which good critics have observed in the *French* tragedies, and

in some of our own that have been formed upon their model. But the case is mistaken. It is not the *poetry* of the French or English drama that deserves their censure, but its prolix and languid *declamation*, neglecting passion for *sensibility*, or expressing *passion* in a calm circuit of words, and without spirit. Even Mr. Addison's *CATO*, which, from being immoderately extolled, has had the usual fate of being as immoderately undervalued, is not to be censured for its abundance of poetry, but for its application of it in a way that hurts the *passion*. General sentiments, uncharacteristic imagery, and both drawn out in a spiritless, or, which comes to the same thing, a too curious expression, are the proper faults of this drama. What the critic of just taste demands in this fine tragedy, is even more poetry, but better applied, and touched with more spirit.

Still, perhaps, we are but on the surface of this matter. The true ground of this mistaken criticism is, The notion, that when the hero is at the crisis of his fate, he is not at liberty to use poetical, that is, highly figurative expression: but that the proper season for these things is when he has nothing else to do. Whereas the truth is just the contrary. The figures, when he is greatly agitated, come of themselves; and, suiting the grandeur and dignity of his situation,
are

are perfectly natural. To use them in his cool and quiet moments, when he has no great interests to prosecute or extricate himself from, is directly against *nature*. For, in this state of things, he must *seek* them, if he will have them. And when he has got them, and made his best use of them, what do they produce? Not sublimity, but bombast. For it is not the *figures*, but the suitability to the *occasion*, that produces either. Not that I am ignorant that there are vices in the *formation* of figures, as well as in their application. But these vices go under various other names. The *pure simple bombast* (if I may be indulged so bold a catachresis) arises from putting figurative expression to an improper use. To give an instance of what I mean. **TACITUS** writes under one continued resentment at the degeneracy of his times, and speaking of some sumptuary laws proposed by the Senate, in 2 *Ann.* c. 33, he says they decreed, *Ne vestis serica viros FOEDARET*. This became the dignity of his historic character and genius. But had his contemporary, **Suetonius**, who wrote *Chronicles* in the spirit of our **STOWE** and **HOLINGSHEAD**, used the same language, it would have set his readers a laughing.

Not but figurative expression, even when *suitable* to the character, genius, and general sub-

ject of a writer, may still be *misplaced*. Thus, had Tacitus, speaking of the honours decreed to Tiberius on a certain occasion, said with his translator Gordon—*which of these he meant to accept or which to reject, the approaching issue of his days has BURIED in oblivion*—the *figure*, the reader sees, would have been miserably out of place; the conceit of the *burial* of his intentions, on the mention of his death, being even ridiculous. But the ridicule, we may be sure, falls on the translator only, and not on his great original, who expresses himself on this occasion not only with propriety, but with the greatest simplicity—*quos omiserit receperitve IN INCERTO fuit ob propinquum vitæ finem*. Ann. l. vi. c. 45.

I have brought these instances to shew that *figurative expression* is not improper, even in a fervent animated historian, on a *fit subject*, and in *due place*: much less should the tragic poet, when his characters are to be shewn in the conflict of the stronger passions, be debarred the use of it.

The short of the matter is, in one word, this: Civil Society first of all *tames us to humanity*, as Cicero expresses it; and, in the course of its discipline, brings us down to one dead level. Its effect is to make us all the same pliant, mimic, obsequious things; not unlike, in a word, (if

our

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our pride could overlook the levity of the comparison) what we see of trained apes. But when the violent passions arise (as in the case of these apes when the apples were thrown before them) this artificial discipline is all shaken off, and we return again to the free and ferocious state of nature. And what is the expression of that state? It is (as we understand by experience) a free and fiery expression, all made up of bold metaphors and daring figures of speech.

The conclusion is, that poetry, *pure poetry*, is the proper language of *passion*, whether we chuse to consider it as ennobling, or debasing the human character.

There is, as I have said, an obvious distinction to be made (and to that the poet's rule, as explained in this note, refers) between the soft and tender, and the more vigorous passions. When the former prevail, the mind is in a weak languid state; and though all allusion and imagery be not improper here, yet as that fire and energy of the soul is wanting, which gives a facility of ranging over our ideas, and of seizing such as may be turned to any resemblance of our own condition, it will for that reason be less frequent in this state of the mind than any other. Such imagery, too, will for the same reason be less striking, because the same languid affections lead to, and make us acquiesce in, a simpler and

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plainer expression. But universally in the stronger passions the *poetical character* prevails, and rises only in proportion to the force and activity of those passions.

To draw the whole then of what has been said on this subject into a standing **RULE** for the observance of the dramatic poet.

“MAN is so formed, that whether he be in
 “joy or grief; in confidence or despair; in
 “pleasure or pain; in prosperity or distress; in
 “security or danger; or torn and distracted by
 “all the various modifications of love, hate,
 “and fear: the imagination is incessantly pre-
 “senting to the mind an infinite variety of
 “images or pictures, conformable to his situa-
 “tion: and these pictures receive their various
 “colouring from the habits, which his birth
 “and condition, his education, profession, and
 “pursuits, have induced. The *representation* of
 “these is the **POETRY**, and a *just* representation,
 “in a great measure, the **ART**, of dramatic
 “writing.”

95. ET TRAGICUS PLERUMQUE DOLET SER-
 MONE PEDESTRI.] Dr. Bentley connects this
 with the following line:

[*Et tragicus plerumque dolet sermone pedestri*
Telephus aut Peleus

for

for the sake, as he says, of *preserving the opposition*. In *comœdiâ iratus Chremes tumido, in tragœdia Telephus pauper humili sermone utitur*. This is specious; but, if the reader attends, he will perceive, that the opposition is better preserved without his connection. For it will stand thus: The poet first asserts of comedy at large, *that it sometimes raises its voice,*

Interdum tamen et vocem comœdia tollit.

Next, he confirms this general remark, by appealing to a particular instance,

Iratusque Chremes tumido diligit ore.

Exactness of *opposition* will require the same method to be observed in speaking of *tragedy*; which accordingly is the case, if we follow the vulgar reading. For, first, it is said of *tragedy*, that, when grief is to be expressed, it generally condescends to an humbler strain,

Et tragicus plerumque dolet sermone pedestri.

And then the general truth, as before, is illustrated by a particular instance,

*Telephus aut Peleus, cum pauper et exul uterque,
Projicit ampullas, &c.*

There is no absurdity, as the Doctor pretends, in taking *tragicus* for *tragœdiarum scriptor*. For the poet, by a common figure, is made to do that, which he represents his persons, as doing.

But this is not the whole that will deserve the reader's regard in this place. A strict attention to the scope and turn of the passage [from line 96 to 114] will lead him to conclude, 1. "That some real tragedy of *Telephus* and " *Peleus* was intended in l. 96, in which the " characters were duly preserved and set forth " in proper language." This the opposition to the *Chremes* of Terence absolutely demands. Let us enquire what this might be. *Euripides*, we know, composed tragedies under these names; but it is unlikely, the poet should contrast the instance of a *Greek* tragedy to a *Latin* comedy. Nor need it be supposed. The subject was familiar to the Roman poets. For we find a *Telephus* ascribed to no less than three of them, *Ennius*, *Accius*, and *Navius* [b]. One of these then, I doubt not, is here intended. But the Roman, in those times, were little more than translations of the Greek plays. Hence it is most likely, that the tragedy of *Telephus* (and probably of *Peleus*, though we have not so direct authority for this) was, in fact, the tragedy of *Euripides*, translated into Latin, and accommodated to the Roman stage by one of these writers. It remains only to enquire, if the *Telephus* itself of *Euripides* answered to this cha-

[b] See *Robert Stephens's Fragm. Vet. Latinorum*.

rafter.

rafter. Which, I think, it manifestly did, from considering what his enemy, the buffoon Aristophanes, hath said concerning it. Every body knows, that the BATPAXOI of this poet contains a direct satire, and burlesque upon *Euripides*. Some part of it is particularly levelled against his *Telephus*: whence we may certainly learn the objections that were made to it. Yet the amount of them is only this, "That he had drawn the character of *Telephus* in too many circumstances of distress and humiliation." His fault was, that he had represented him more like a beggar than an unfortunate prince. Which, in more candid hands, would, I suppose, amount only to this, "That the poet had painted his distress in the most natural and affecting manner." He had stripped him of his royalty, and, together with it, of the pomp and ostentation of the regal language, the very beauty which Horace applauds and admires in his *Telephus*.

2. Next, I think it as clear from what follows, "That some real tragedy of *Telephus*, and *Peleus*, was also glanced at, of a different stamp from the other, and in which the characters were not supported by such propriety of language." Let the reader judge. Having quoted a *Telephus* and *Peleus*, as examples to the rule concerning the style of tragedy, and

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afterwards enlarged [from l. 98 to 103] on the reasons of their excellence, he returns, with an air of insult, to the same names, apostrophizing them in the following manner :

*Telephe, vel Peleu, male si mandata loquëris,
Aut dormitabo aut ridebo.*

But why this address to *characters*, which he had before alledged, as examples of true dramatical *drawing*? Would any tolerable writer, after having applauded Shakespeare's *King Lear*, as an instance of the kingly character in distress, naturally painted, apostrophize it, with such pointed vehemence, on the contrary supposition? But let this pass. The poet, as though a notorious violation of the critic's rules was to be thoroughly exposed, goes on, in the seven following lines, to search into the bottom of this affair, laying open the source and ground of his judgment; and concludes upon the whole,

Si dicentis erunt fortunis absena dicta,

ROMANI TOLLENT EQUITESQUE PATRESQUE
CACHINNUM.

Can any thing be plainer, than that this last line points at some well-known instance of a Latin play, which had provoked, upon this account, the contempt and laughter of the best judges? It may further be observed, that this way of understanding the passage before us, as it

is more conformable to what is here shewn to be the general scope of the epistle, so doth it, in its turn, likewise countenance, or rather clearly shew, the truth and certainty of this method of interpretation.

99. NON SATIS EST PULCHRA, &c.] Dr. Bentley objects to *pulchra*, because this, he says, is a general term, including under it every species of beauty, and therefore that of *dulcis*, or the *affecting*. But the great critic did not sufficiently attend to the connexion, which, as F. Robortellus, in his paraphrase on the epistle, well observes, stands thus: "It is not enough, that tragedies have that kind of beauty, which arises from a pomp and splendor of diction, they must also be pathetic or affecting." *Objiciat se mihi hoc loco aliquis et dicat, si id fiat [i. e. si propiciantur ampullæ] corrumpi omnem venustatem et gravitatem poematis tragici, quod nihil nisi grande et elatum recipit. Huic ego ita respondendum puto, non satis esse, ut poemata venusta sint et dignitatem suam servant: nam dulcedine quoque et suavitate quâdam sunt conspergenda, ut possint auditoris animum inflectere in quamcunque voluerint partem.*

But a very ingenious person, who knows how to unite philosophy with criticism; and to all that is elegant in *taste*, to add what is most just and

and accurate in *science*, hath, in the following note, shewn the very foundation of Dr. Bentley's criticism to be erroneous.

" There are a multitude of words in every language, which are sometimes used in a *wider*, sometimes in a *more restrained* sense. Of this kind are the *καλόν* of the Greeks, the *pulchrum* of the Romans, and the words by which they are translated in modern languages. To whatever subjects these epithets are applied, we always intend to signify that they give us *pleasure*: and we seldom apply them to any subjects, but those which please by means of impressions made on the fancy; *including* under this name the reception of images conveyed directly by the sight itself. As poetry therefore always addresses itself to the imagination, every species of *poetical excellence* obtains the name of *Beauty*: and, among the rest, the power of pleasing us by affecting the *passions*; an effect which entirely depends on the various images presented to our view. In this sense of the word *beautiful*, it cannot be opposed to *pathetic*. *Pulchrum enim quasunque carminis virtutes, etiam ipsam dulcedinem, in se continere meritò videatur.*

But nothing, I think, can be plainer, than that this epithet is often used more *determinately*. Visible forms are not merely occasions of pleasure,

sure, in common with other objects, but they produce a pleasure of a singular kind. And the power they have of producing it, is properly denominated by the name of *Beauty*. Whether regularity and variety have been rightly assigned, as the circumstances on which it depends, is a question, which in this place we need not consider. It cannot at least be denied, that we make a distinction among the objects of sight, when the things themselves are removed from our view; and that we annex the names of Beauty and Deformity to different objects and different pictures, in consequence of these perceptions. I ask then, what is meant, when the words are thus supplied? Is it only that we are *pleased* or *displeased*? This surely cannot be said. For the epithets would then be applied with equal propriety to the objects of different senses; and the fragrance of a flower, for instance, would be a species of beauty; the bitterness of wormwood a species of deformity.—Do we then mean that we receive pleasure and pain by means of the *imagination*? We may indeed mean *this*: but we certainly mean *more* than this. For the same names are used and applied, in a manner perfectly similar, by numbers of persons who never once thought of this artificial method of distinguishing their ideas. There is then some kind of perception, common to them and us,

which

which has occasioned this uniformity in our ways of speaking: and whether you will chuse to consider the perceptive faculty as resulting only from habit, or allow it the name of a *Sense* of Beauty; whether these perceptions can, or cannot, be resolved into some *general* principle, imagination of private advantage, or sympathy with others, are, in the present case, circumstances wholly indifferent.

If it be admitted that the epithets, of which we are speaking, were originally used in this restrained sense, it is easy to see that they would readily obtain the more *extended* signification. For the species of pleasure to which they were first confined, was found always to arise from images impressed on the fancy: what then more natural, than to apply the same words to every species of pleasure resulting from the imagination, and to every species of images productive of pleasure? Thus the *beauty* of a human person might originally signify such combinations of figure and colour, as produced the *peculiar* perception above-mentioned. *Pulchritudo corporis* (says Cicero) *aptâ compositione membrorum movet oculos, et eo ipso delectat, &c.*—But from this signification to the other the transition was easy and obvious. If every beautiful form gave pleasure, every pleasing form might come to be called beautiful: not because the same perceptions

tions are excited by *all* (the pleasures being apparently different) but because they are all excited in the same manner. And this is confirmed by a distinction which every one understands between beauties of the *regular* and *irregular* kind. When we would distinguish these from each other, we call the latter *agreeable*, and leave to the former only the name of *beautiful*: that is, we confine the latter term to its proper and original sense.—In much the same manner objects *not visible* may sometimes obtain the name of beauty, for no other reason than because the imagination is agreeably employed about them; and we may speak of a beautiful *character*, as well as a beautiful *person*: by no means intending that we have the same *feeling* from the one as the other, but that in both cases we are *pleased*; and that in both the *imagination* contributes to the pleasure.

Now as every *representative art* is capable of affording us pleasure, and this pleasure is occasioned by images impressed on the fancy; every pleasing production of art, will of course obtain the name of beautiful. Yet this hinders us not from considering beauty as a *distinct* excellence in such productions. For we may distinguish, either in a picture or poem, between the pleasures we receive directly from the imitation of *visible forms*, and those which principally depend
on

on *other* kinds of imitation: And we may consider visible forms themselves either as *occasions* of pleasure, in *common* with other objects; or as yielding us that *peculiar* delight which they alone are capable of yielding. If we use the word *beautiful* in this *limited* sense, it is very intelligibly opposed to *pathetic*. Images of Groves, Fields, Rocks, and Water, afford us a pleasure extremely different from that which we find in the indulgence of our *tender affections*: nor can there be any danger of confounding the agreeable perception received from a masterly statue of an Apollo or a Venus, with that which arises from a representation of the *terrors* men feel under a storm or a plague.

It is no objection to what has been said, that the objects we call *beautiful*, may also in some cases be occasions of *passion*. The sight, for instance, of a beautiful person may give birth to the passion of love: yet to perceive the beauty, and to feel the passion, are two different things. For every beautiful object does not produce love in every observer, and the same passion is sometimes excited by objects not beautiful; I mean not called beautiful by the persons themselves who are affected by them. And the distinction between these feelings, would receive further confirmation (if indeed there could be any doubt of it) from observing that people frequently speak

of beauty, and, as far as appears intelligibly, in persons of their *own sex*; who feel perhaps no *passion* but that of *envy*: which will not surely be thought the same with the perception of *beauty*.

There is then no room for an objection to the text of Horace, as it stood before Dr. B.'s emendation: unless it should be thought an impropriety to oppose two epithets which are *capable of being understood in senses not opposite*. But there is not the least ground for this imagination. For when a word of uncertain signification is *opposed* to another whose signification is certain, the opposition itself *determines* the sense. The word *day* in one of its senses includes the whole space of twenty-four hours: yet it is not surely an impropriety to oppose *day* to *night*.—In like manner the words *pulchra poemata*, if we were not directed by the context, might signify *good poems* in general: but when the beauty of a poem is *distinguished* from other excellences, this distinction will lead us to confine our idea to *beautiful imagery*; and we know it is agreeable to the sentiments which Horace expresses in other places, to declare that this kind of merit is *insufficient* in *dramatic* writers, from whom we expect a pleasure of very different kind. Indeed the most exquisite painting, if it is not constantly subordinate to this higher end, becomes

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becomes not only insufficient, but *impertinent*: serving only to divert the attention, and interrupt the course of the passions.

It may seem, perhaps, that the force of a *Latin* expression cannot be ascertained from reflections of this sort, but must be gathered from citations of particular passages. And this indeed is true with regard to the *peculiarities* of the language. But the question before us is of a different kind. It is a question of *philosophy* rather than *criticism*: as depending on those differences of ideas, which are marked by similar forms of expression in *all* languages."

102. SI VIS ME FLERE, DOLENDUM EST PRIMUM IPSI TIBI:] *Tragedy*, as [c] one said, who had a heart to feel its tenderest emotions, *shewed forth the ulcers that are covered with tissue*. In order to awaken and call forth in the spectator all those sympathies, which naturally await on the lively exhibition of such a scene, the writer must have a soul *tuned* to the most exquisite sensibility, and susceptible of the same vibrations from his own created images, which are known to *shake* the sufferer in real life. This is so uncommon a pitch of humanity, that it is no wonder, so few have succeeded in this *trying* part of the drama. Euripides, of all the antients,

[c] Sir Philip Sidney.

had

had most of this sympathetic tenderness in his nature, and accordingly we find him without a rival in this praise. Τραγικώτατος τῶν ποιητῶν, says Aristotle of him [Περὶ ποιητ. κ. ιγ'.] and to the same purpose another great critic, *In affectibus cum omnibus mirus; tum in iis, qui MISERATIONE constant, facile præcipuus.* Quinct. l. x. c. i.] They, who apply themselves to express the pitiable ἡλεινόν in tragedy, would do well to examine their own hearts by this rule, before they presume to practise upon those of others. See, further, this remark applied by Cicero to the subject of oratory, and enforced with his usual elegance and good sense. [l. ii. c. 45. *De oratore.*]

103.—TUNC TUA ME INFORTUNIA LAEDENT.] This is expressed with accuracy. Yet the truth is, The more we are hurt with representations of this sort, the more we are pleased with them. Whence arises this strange pleasure? The question hath been frequently asked, and various answers have been given to it.

But of all the solutions of this famous difficulty, that which we have just now received from Mr. Hume, is by far the most curious.

His account in short is, "That the force of
 "imagination, the energy of expression, the
 "power of numbers, the charms of imitation,
 "are all naturally of themselves delightful to
 "the mind; that these sentiments of beauty,
 "being the *predominant* emotions, seize the
 "whole mind, and convert the uneasy melan-
 "choly passions into themselves. In a word,
 "that the sentiments of *beauty*, excited by a
 "good tragedy, are the superior prevailing
 "movements, and transform the subordinate
 "impressions arising from *grief*, *compassion*, *in-*
 "*dignation* and *terror*, into one uniform and
 "strong enjoyment." [*See four Dissertations by*
D. Hume, Esq; p. 185, &c.]

I have but two objections to this ingenious
 theory. ONE is, that it supposes the impression
 of grief or terror, excited by a well-written
 tragedy, to be weaker than that which arises
 from our observation of the faculties of the
 writer, the power of numbers, and imitation.
 Which to me is much the same thing as saying,
 That the sight of a precipice hanging over our
 heads makes a fainter impression on the eye, than
 the shrubs and wild flowers with which it hap-
 pens to be covered. The fact is so far other-
 wise, that, if the tragedy be well-written, I will
 venture

venture to say, the faculties of the writer, the charms of poetry, or even the thought of imitation, never come into the spectator's head. But he may feel the effect of them, it will be said, for all that. True: But unluckily the whole effect of these things is (and that was my OTHER objection) to deepen the impressions of grief and terror. They are out of place, and altogether impertinent, if they contribute to any other end. So that to say, The impression of grief and terror from a tragic story, strong as it is in itself, and made still stronger by the art of the poet, is a weaker impression, than the mere pleasure arising from that *art*, is methinks to account for one mystery by another ten times greater, and to make the poet a verier *magician* than Horace ever intended to represent him.

This ingenious solution then, being so evidently founded on the supposition of a *false fact*, deserves no further notice. As to the *difficulty* itself, the following hints may, perhaps, enable the reader, in some measure, to account for it.

1. It is not to be doubted but that we love to have our *attention* raised, and our *curiosity* gratified. So far the ABBE DU BOS' system may be admitted.

2. The representation, however distressful, is still seen to be a representation. We find our hearts affected, and even pained, by a good tragedy.

tragedy. But we instantly recollect that the scene is fictitious; and the *recollection* not only abates our uneasiness, but diffuses a secret joy upon the mind, in the discovery we make that the *occasion* of our uneasiness is not real. Just as our awaking from a frightful dream, and sometimes a secret consciousness of the illusion during the dream itself, is attended with pleasure. That so much of M. DE FONTENELLE's notion must be admitted, is clear, because children, who take the sufferings on the stage for realities, are so afflicted by them that they do not care to repeat the experiment.

But still, all this is by no means a full account of the matter. For,

3. It should be considered, that ALL the uneasy passions, in the very time that we are distressed by them, nay, though the occasions be instant and real, have a secret complacency mixed with them. It seems as if providence, in compassion to human feeling, had, together with our sorrows, infused a kind of balm into the mind, to temper and qualify, as it were, these bitter ingredients. But,

4. Besides this *general* provision, the nature of the *peculiar* passions, excited by tragedy, is such as, in a more eminent degree, must produce pleasure. For what are these, but indignation at prosperous vice, or the commiseration of suffering

fering virtue? And the agitation of these passions is, even in real life, accompanied with a certain delight, which was, no doubt, intended to quicken us in the exercise of those social offices. Still further.

5. To the pleasure *directly* springing from these passions we may add another, which naturally, but imperceptibly, almost steals in upon us from *reflexion*. We are conscious to our own humanity on these tender occasions. We understand and feel that it is *right* for us to be affected by the distresses of others. Our pain is softened by a secret exultation in the rectitude of these sympathies. It is true, this reflex act of the mind is prevented, or suspended at least for a time, when the sufferings are real, and concern those for whom we are most interested. But the fictions of the stage do not press upon us so closely.

Putting all these things together, the conclusion is, That though the impressions of the theatre are, in their immediate effect, painful to us, yet they must, on the whole, afford an extreme pleasure, and that in proportion to the degree of the first painful impression. For not only our attention is roused, but our moral instincts are gratified; we reflect with joy that they are so, and we reflect too that the sorrows which call them forth, and give this exercise to

our humanity, are but fictitious. We are occupied, in a word, by a *great* event; we are melted into tears by a *distressful* one; the heart is relieved by this burst of sorrow; is cheered and animated by the finest moral feelings; exults in the consciousness of its own sensibility; and finds, in conclusion, that the whole is but an illusion.

The sum is, that we are not so properly delighted by the passions, as *through* them. They give *occasion* to the most pleasing movements and gratulations. The art of the poet indeed consists in giving *pain*. But nature and reflexion fly to our relief; and though they do not convert our pain into joy (for that methinks would be little less than a new kind of *transubstantiation*) they have an equivalent effect in producing an exquisite joy out of our preceding sorrows.

119. AUT FAMAM SEQUERE, &c.] The connection lies thus: *Language* must agree with *character*; *character* with *fame*, or at least with *itself*.

123. SIT MEDEA FEROX INVICTAQUE.] Horace took this instance from Euripides, where the *unconquered fierceness* of this character is preserved in that due mediocrity, which nature and
just

just writing demand. The poet, in giving her character, is content to say of her,

Βαρύτα γὰρ φρήν εἰς ἀνέξῃαι κακῶς

Πάσχει.

And

Δεινὴ γάρ. εἰ τοι ῥαδίως γε συμβαλὼν

Ἐχθρὰν τις αὐτῇ, καλλίνικον οἴσεται.

And she herself, when opening to the chorus her last horrid purpose, says, fiercely indeed, but not frantically :

Μηδεὶς με φαύλην κρίσθην νομίζετω

Μηδ' ἡσυχάειν.

And this is *nature*, which Seneca not perceiving, and yet willing to write up to the critic's rule, hath outraged her character beyond all bounds, and, instead of a resolute, revengeful woman, hath made of her a downright fury. Hence her passion is wrought up to a greater height in the very first scene of the Latin play, than it ever reaches in the Greek poet. The tenor of her language throughout is,

invadam deos,

Et cuncta quatiam.

And hence, in particular, the third and fourth acts expose to our view all the horrors of sorcery (and those too *imaged* to an extravagance) which

Euripides, with so much better judgment, thought fit entirely to conceal.

126. SERVETUR AD IMUM QUALIS AB INCEPTO PROCESSERIT, ET SIBI CONSTET.] The rule is, as appears from the reason of the thing, and from Aristotle, "Let an *uniformity* of character be preserved, or at least a *consistency*:" i. e. either let the manners be exactly the same from the beginning to the end of the play, as those of Medea, for instance, and Orestes; or, if any change be necessary, let it be such as may consist with, and be easily reconciled to, the manners formerly attributed; as is seen in the case of Electra and Iphigenia. We should read then, it is plain,

servetur ad imum
Qualis ab incepto processerit, AUT sibi constet.

The mistake arose from imagining, that a character could no other way *consist* with itself, but by being *uniform*. A mistake however, which, as I said, not the reason of the thing only, but Aristotle's rule might have set right. It is expressed thus: Τέταρτον δὲ τὸ ὁμαλόν. Καὶ γὰρ ἀνώμαλός τις ἦ, ὁ τὴν μίμησιν παρέχων καὶ τοιούτου ἥθους ὑποβλήεις, ὅμως ὁμαλῶς ἀνώμαλον δεῖ εἶναι. Ποιητ. κ. ιε. which last words, having been not at all understood, have kept his interpreters from seeing

seeing the true sense and scope of the precept. For they have been explained of such characters as that of *Tigellius* in Horace; which, however proper for satire, or for farcical comedy, are of too fantastical and whimsical a nature to be admitted into tragedy; of which Aristotle must there be chiefly understood to speak, and to which Horace, in this place, alone confines himself. It is true, indeed, it may be said, that “though a *whimsical* or *fantastic* character be “improper for tragedy, an *irresolute* one is not. “Nothing is finer than a struggle between different passions; and it is perfectly natural, “that in such a circumstance, each should prevail by turns.” But then there is the widest difference between the two cases. *Tigellius*, with all his fantastical irresolution, is as *uniform* a character, as that of *Mitio*. If the expression may be allowed, its very *inconsistency* is of the essence of its *uniformity*. On the other hand, *Electra*, torn with sundry conflicting passions, is most apparently, and in the properest notion of the word, *ununiform*. One of the strongest touches in her character is that of a high, heroic spirit, sensible to her own and her family’s injuries, and determined, at any rate, to revenge them. Yet no sooner is this revenge perpetrated, than she softens, relents, and pities. Here is a manifest *ununiformity*, which can, in no proper sense of the

the expression, lay claim to the critic's ὁμαλόν, but may be so managed by the poet's skill, as to become consistent with the basis or foundation of her character, that is, to be ὁμαλῶς ἀνώμαλον. And that this, in fact, was the meaning of the critic, is plain from the similar example to his own rule, given in the case of Iphigenia: which he specifies (how justly, will be considered hereafter) as an instance of the ἀνωμάλῃ, *irregular*, or *ununiform* character, ill-expressed, or made *inconsistent*. So that the genuine sense of the precept is, "Let the manners be uniform; or, "if ununiform, yet consistently so, or uniformly "ununiform:" exactly copied, according to the reading here given, by Horace. Whereas in the other way, it stands thus: "Let your "characters be uniform, or unchanged; or, if "you paint an ununiform character (such as "Tigellius) let it be ununiform all the way; "i. e. such an irregular character to the end of "the play, as it was at the beginning; which "is, in effect, to say, let be *uniform*:" which apparently destroys the latter part of the precept, and makes it an unmeaning tautology with the former.

127. AUT SIBI CONSTET.] The ELECTRA and IPHIGENIA of Euripides have been quoted, in the preceding note, as instances of *ununiform* characters,

characters, justly sustained, or, what Aristotle calls, *uniformly ununiform*: and this, though the general opinion condemns the one, and the great critic himself the other. The reader will expect some account to be given of this singularity.

1. The objection to Electra is, that her character is drawn with such heightenings of implacability and resentment, as make it utterly incredible, she should, immediately on the murder of Clytæmnestra, fall into the same excess of grief and regret, as Orestes. In confutation of this censure I observe, 1. That the objection proceeds on a mistaken presumption, that the distress of Electra is equally violent with that of Orestes. On the contrary, it is discriminated from it by two plain marks. 1. Orestes's grief is expressed in stronger and more emphatic terms—he *accuses the Gods—he reproaches his sister—he dwells upon every horrid circumstance, that can enhance the guilt of the murder*. Electra, in the mean time, *confesses the scene to be mournful—is apprehensive of bad consequences—calmly submits to the just reproaches of her brother*. 2. He labours, as much as possible, to clear himself from the imputation of the act. She takes it wholly on herself, but, regarding it rather as her
fate,

fate, than her fault, comforts herself in reflecting on the justice of it.

Πατρός δ' ἔτι σῶς φόνον δικάϊως. Act v.

This last circumstance puts the widest difference between the two cases. The one shews a perfect distraction of mind, which cannot even bear the consciousness of its crimes: the other, a firm and steady spirit, sensible indeed to its misery, but not oppressed or astonished by it.

2. But this measure of grief, so delicately marked, and, with such truth of character, ascribed to Electra, ought not, it is further insisted, to have shewn itself immediately on the murder of Clytæmnestra. But why not? There is nothing in the *character of Electra*, the *maxims of those times*, or in the *disposition of the drama itself*, to render this change improper or incredible. On the contrary, there is much under each of these heads, to lead one to expect it.

1. *Electra's character* is indeed that of a fierce, and determined, but withall of a generous and virtuous woman. Her motives to revenge were, principally, a strong sense of justice, and superior affection for a father; not a rooted, unnatural aversion to a mother. She acted, as appears, not from the perturbation of a tumultuous revenge (in that case indeed the objection had been

been of weight) but from a fixed abhorrence of wrong, and a virtuous sense of duty. And what should hinder a person of this character from being instantly touched with the distress of such a spectacle?

2. *The maxims of those times also favour this conduct.* For, 1. The notions of strict remunerative justice were then carried very high. This appears from the *lex talionis*, which, we know, was in great credit in elder Greece; from whence it was afterwards transferred into the Law of the XII Tables. Hence *blood for blood* [*αἷμα δ' αἵματος δάσειμὸς*,—as the messenger, in his account of the death of Ægysthus, expresses it, Act iv.] was the command and rule of justice. This the chorus, as well as the parricides, frequently insist upon, as the ground and justification of the murder. 2. This severe vengeance on enormous offenders was believed, not only consonant to the rules of *human*, but to be the object, and to make the especial care, of the *divine*, justice. And thus the antients conceived of this very case. *Juvenal*, speaking of Orestes,

Quippe ille DEIS AUCTORIBUS ultor

Patris erat cæsi media inter pocula. Sat. viii.

And to this opinion agrees that tradition, or rather fiction, of the poets, who, though they represent

represent the judges of the Areopagus as divided in their sentiments of this matter, yet make no scruple of bringing in Minerva herself to pronounce his absolution. *Hoc etiam fictis fabulis doctissimi homines memoriæ prodiderunt, eum, qui patris ulciscendi causâ matrem necavisset, variatis hominum sententiis, non solum divinâ, sed etiam sapientissimæ Deæ sententiâ absolutum* [Cic. pro MILON.] The venerable council of Areopagus, when judging by the severe rules of *written* justice, it seems, did not condemn the criminal; and the *unwritten* law of equity, which the fable calls the *wisdom of Pallas*, formally acquitted him. The murder then was not against *human*, and directly agreeable to the determinations of *divine*, justice. Of this too the chorus takes care to inform us :

Νέμεσι τοι δίξαν θεός ὅταν τύχη. Aët iv.

This explains the reason of Electra's question to Orestes, who had pleaded the impiety of murdering a mother,

Καὶ μὲν ἀμύνων πατρὶ, δυσσεβὲς ἴση ;

the force of which lies in this, that a father's death revenged upon the guilty mother, was equally *pious* as just. 3. This vengeance was, of course, to be executed by the nearest relations of the deceased. This the law prescribed in judicial prosecutions. Who then so fit instruments

ments of fate, when that justice was precluded to them? This is expressed, in answer to the plea of Orestes, that he should suffer the vengeance of the Gods for the murder of his mother; Electra replies,

Τῷ δαὶ πατρίαν διαμεθῆς τιμωρίαν;

i. e. Who then shall repay vengeance to our father? She owns the consequence, yet insists on the duty of incurring it. There was no other to whom the right of vengeance properly belonged.

4. Further, the pagan doctrine of fate was such, that, in order to discharge duty in one respect, it was unavoidable to incur guilt in another. This was the case here. Phoebus commanded, and fate had decreed; yet obedience was a crime, to be expiated by future punishment. This may seem strange to us, who have other notions of these matters, but was perfectly according to the pagan system. The result is, that they knowingly exposed themselves to vengeance, in order to fulfil their fate. All that remained was to lament their destiny, and revere the awful and mysterious providence of their Gods. And this is, exactly, what Orestes pleads, in vindication of himself, elsewhere:

Ἄλλ' ὡς μὲν ἐκ εὔ, μὴ λεγ', εἰργασαι τὰδε,

Ἡμῖν δὲ τοῖς δράσασιν ἐκ εὐδαιμόνως. Orest. Act ii.

5. Lastly, it should be remembered, how heinous a crime adultery was esteemed in the old world; when, as well as murder, we find it punished with death. The law of the XII Tables expressly says, *ADULTERII CONVICTAM VIR ET COGNATI, VTI VELINT, NECANTO*. Now, all these considerations put together, Electra might assist at the assassination of her mother, consistently with the strongest feelings of piety and affection. That these then should instantly break forth, so soon as the debt to justice, to duty, and to fate was paid, is nothing wonderful. And this, by the way, vindicates the chorus from the inconsistency, by some charged upon it, in condemning the act, when done, which before they had laboured to justify. The common answer, "That the chorus follows the character of the people," is insufficient. For (besides that the chorus always sustains a moral character) whence that inconsistency in the people themselves? The reason was, the popular creed of those times. It had been an omission of duty to have declined, it was criminal to execute, the murder.

3. The disposition of the drama (whether the most judicious, or not, is not the question) was calculated to introduce this change with the greatest probability. Electra's principal resentment was to Ægisthus. From him chiefly proceeded

ceeded her ill treatment, and from him was apprehended the main danger of the enterprize. Now, Ægysthus being taken off in the beginning of the preceding act, there was time to indulge all the movements and gratulations of revenge, which the objection supposes should precede, and for a while suspend the horrors of remorse, before they come to the murder of Clytæmnestra. This is rendered the more likely by the long parley, that goes before it; which rather tends to soften, than exasperate, her resentments, and seems artfully contrived to prepare the change, that follows.

On the whole, Electra's concern, as managed by the poet, is agreeable to the tenor of her character, and the circumstances of her situation. To have drawn her otherwise, had been perhaps in the taste of modern tragedy, but had certainly been beside the line of nature, and practice of the antients.

2. The case of Iphigenia, though a greater authority stand in the way, is still easier. Aristotle's words are, τῷ δὲ ἀνωμάλῃ [παράδειγμα] ἢ ἐν Αὐλίδι Ἰφιγένεια. Οὐδὲν γὰρ ἴσκειν ἡ ἱκετεύουσα τῇ ὑσέρῃ, i. e. "Iphigenia is an instance of the inconsistent character: for there is no probable conformity betwixt her fears and supplications at first, and her firmness and resolution afterwards." But how doth
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this appear, independently of the name of this great critic? Iphigenia is drawn indeed, at first, fearful and suppliant: and surely with the greatest observance of nature. The account of her destination to the altar was sudden, and without the least preparation; and, as Lucretius well observes, in commenting her case, *NUBENDI TEMPORE IN IPSO*; when her thoughts were all employed, and, according to the simplicity of those times, confessed to be so, on her promised nuptials. The cause of such destination too, as appeared at first, was the private family interest of Menelaus. All this justifies, or rather demands, the strongest expression of female fear and weakness. "But she afterwards recants, "and voluntarily devotes herself to the altar." And this, with the same strict attention to probability. She had now informed herself of the importance of the case. Her devotement was the demand of Apollo, and the joint petition of all Greece. The glory of her country, the dignity and interest of her family, the life of the generous Achilles, and her own future fame, were, all, nearly concerned in it. All this considered, together with the high, heroic sentiments of those times, and the superior merit, as was believed, of voluntary devotement, Iphigenia's character must have been very unfit for the distress of a whole tragedy to turn upon, if she

she had not, in the end, discovered the readiest submission to her appointment. But, to shew with what wonderful propriety the poet knew to sustain his characters, we find her, after all, and notwithstanding the heroism of the change, in a strong and passionate apostrophe to her native Mycenæ, confessing some involuntary apprehensions and regrets, the remains of that instinctive abhorrence of death, which had before so strongly possessed her.

Ἐθρεψας Ἑλλάδι μέγα φάος—
 Σανῶσα δ' ἐν ἀνείνῳμαι.

Once the bright star of Greece —
 But I submit to die.

This, I take to be not only a full vindication of the consistency of Iphigenia's character, but as delicate a stroke of nature, as is, perhaps, to be found in any writer.

After the writing of this note, I was pleased to find, that so sensible a critic, as P. Brumoi, had been before me in these sentiments concerning the character of Iphigenia. The reasons he employs, are nearly the same. Only he confirms them all by shewing, that the Iphigenia of Racine, which is modelled, not according to the practice of Euripides, but the comment of Aristotle, is, in all respects, so much the worse for it. In justice to this ingenious writer, it

should be owned, that he is almost the only one of his nation, who hath perfectly seen through the foppery, or, as some affect to esteem it, the refinement of French manners. This hath enabled him to give us, in his *Théâtre des Græcs*, a masterly, and very useful view of the Greek stage; set forth in all its genuine simplicity, and defended on the sure principles of nature and common sense.

128. *DIFFICILE EST PROPRIE COMMUNIA DICERE:]* Lambin's Comment is *Communia hoc loco appellat Horatius argumenta fabularum à nullo adhuc tractata: et ita, quæ cuiusvis exposita sunt et in medio quodammodo posita, quasi vacua et à nemine occupata.* And that this is the true meaning of *communia*, is evidently fixed by the words *ignota indictaque*, which are explanatory of it: so that the sense, given it in the commentary, is unquestionably the right one. Yet, notwithstanding the clearness of the case, a late critic hath this strange passage: *Difficile quidem esse proprie communia dicere, hoc est, materiam vulgarem, notam, et à medio petitam ita immutare atque exornare, ut nova et scriptori propria videatur, ultro concedimus; et maximi proculdubio ponderis ista est observatio. Sed omnibus utrinque collatis, et tum difficilis, tum venusti, tam judicii quam ingenii ratione habita, major videtur esse gloria fabulam formare penitus novam.*

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novam, quam veterem, utcumque mutatam, de novo exhibere. [Poët. Præl. vol. ii. p. 164.] Where having first, put a wrong construction on the word *communis*, he employs it to introduce an impertinent criticism. For where does the poet prefer the glory of refitting *old* subjects, to that of inventing new ones? The contrary is implied in what he urges about the superior difficulty of the latter; from which he dissuades his countrymen, only in respect of their abilities and inexperience in these matters; and in order to cultivate in them, which is the main view of the epistle, a spirit of correctness, by sending them to the old subjects, treated by the Greek writers.

131. PUBLICA MATERIES PRIVATI JURIS ERIT, &c.] *Publica materies* is just the reverse of what the poet had before stiled *communis*; the latter meaning such subjects or characters, as, though by their nature left in common to all, had yet, in fact, not been *occupied* by any writer—the former those, which had already been made *public* by *occupation*. In order to acquire a property in subjects of this sort, the poet directs us to observe the three following cautions: 1. *Not to follow the trite, obvious round of the original work*, i. e. not servilely and scrupulously to adhere to its plan or method. 2. *Not*

to be translators, instead of imitators, i. e. if it shall be thought fit to imitate more expressly any part of the original, to do it with freedom and spirit, and without a slavish attachment to the mode of expression. 3. *Not to adopt any particular incident, that may occur in the proposed model, which either decency, or the nature of the work would reject.* M. Dacier illustrates these rules, which have been conceived to contain no small difficulty, from the Iliad; to which the poet himself refers, and probably not without an eye to particular instances of the errors, here condemned, in the Latin tragedies. For want of these, it may be of use to fetch an illustration from some examples in our own. And we need not look far for them. Almost every modern play affords an instance of one or other of these faults. The single one of Catiline by B. Jonson is, itself, a specimen of them all. This tragedy, which hath otherwise great merit, and on which its author appears to have placed no small value, is, in fact, the Catilinarian war of Sallust, put into poetical dialogue, and so offends against the *first* rule of the poet, in following too servilely the plain beaten round of the Chronicle. 2. Next, the speeches of Cicero and Catiline, of Cato and Caesar, are, all of them, direct and literal translations of the historian and orator, in violation of the *second* rule, which forbids a too close

close attachment to the mode, or form of expression.

3. There are several transgressions of that rule, which enjoins *a strict regard to the nature and genius of the work*. One is obvious and striking. In the history, which had, for its subject, the whole Catilinarian war, the fates of the conspirators were distinctly to be recorded; and the preceding debates, concerning the manner of their punishment, afforded an occasion, too inviting to be overlooked by an historian, and above all a republican historian, of embellishing his narration by set harangues. Hence the long speeches of Cæsar and Cato in the senate have great propriety, and are justly esteemed among the leading beauties of that work. But the case was totally different in the drama; which, taking for its subject the single fate of Catiline, had no concern with the other conspirators, whose fates at most should only have been hinted at, not debated with all the circumstance and pomp of rhetoric on the stage. Nothing can be more flat and disgusting, than this calm, impertinent pleading; especially in the very heat and winding up of the plot. But the poet was misled by the beauty it appeared to have in the original composition, without attending to the peculiar laws of the drama, and the *indecorum* it must needs have in so very different a work.

136. NEC SIC INCIPIES, UT SCRIPTOR CYCLICUS OLIM:] All this [to line 153] is a continuation of the poet's advice, given above,

Rectius Iliacum carmen deducis in actus

Quam si proferres ignota indiclaque primus.

For, having first shewn in what respects a close observance of the epic form would be vicious in tragedy, he now prescribes how far it may be usefully admitted. And this is, 1. [from l. 136 to 146] in the simplicity and modesty of the exordium; and, 2. [to l. 153] in the artificial method and contexture of the piece. 1. The reason of the former rule is founded on the impropriety of raising a greater expectation, at setting out, than can afterwards be answered by the sequel of the poem. But, because the epic writers themselves, from whom this conduct was to be drawn, had sometimes transgressed this rule, and as the example of such an error would be likely to infect, and, in all probability, actually did infect, the tragic poets of that time, he takes occasion, 1. to criticize an absurd instance of it; and, 2. to oppose to it the wiser practice of Homer.

2. The like conduct he observes under the second article. For, being to recommend to the tragic writer such an artificial disposition of his subject, as *hastens rapidly to the event*, and rejects,

as impertinent, all particulars in the round of the story, which would unnecessarily obstruct his course to it—a plan essentially necessary to the legitimate epic—he first glances at the injudicious violation of this method in a certain poem on *the return of* Diomed, and then illustrates and lays open the superior art and beauty of the *Iliad*. And all this, as appears, for the sole purpose of explaining and enforcing the precept about forming the plots of tragedies from epic poems. Whence we see, how properly the examples of the errors, here condemned, are taken, not from the *drama*, as the less attentive reader might expect, but solely from the *epos*; for, *this* being made the object of imitation to the dramatic poet, as the tenor of the place shews, it became necessary to guard against the influence of bad models. Which I observe for the sake of those, who, from not apprehending the connection of this, and such like passages in the epistle, hastily conclude it to be a confused medley of precepts concerning the art of poetry, in general; and not a regular well-conducted piece, uniformly tending to lay open the state, and to remedy the defects, of the Roman stage.

148. SEMPER ADEVENTUM FESTINAT; &c.
The disposition, here recommended to the poet,
might

might be shewn *universally* right from the clearest principles. But the propriety and beauty of it will, perhaps, be best apprehended by such as are unused to the more abstract criticism, from attending to a *particular* instance. Let us conceive an objector then to put the following query: "Supposing the author of the *Æneis* to have related, in the natural order, the destruction of Troy, would not the subject have been, to all intents and purposes, as much *one*, as it is under its present form; in which that event is told, in the second book, by way of episode?" I answer, by no means. The reason is taken from *the nature of the work*, and from *the state and expectations of the reader*.

1. The *nature of an epic or narrative poem* is this, that it lays the author under an obligation of shewing any event, which he formally undertakes in his own person, at full length, and with all its material circumstances. Every figure must be drawn in full proportion, and exhibited in strong, glowing colours. Now had the subject of the second book of the *Æneis* been related in this extent, it must not only have taken up one, but many books. By this faithful and animated *drawing*, and the time it would necessarily have to *play* upon the imagination, the event had grown into such importance, that

that the remainder could only have passed for a kind of appendix to it.

2. The same conclusion is drawn from considering *the state of the reader*. For, hurried away by an instinctive impatience, he pursues the proposed event with eagerness and rapidity. So circumstantial a detail, as was supposed, of an intermediate action not necessarily connected with it, breaks the course of his expectations, and throws forward the point of view to an immoderate distance. In the mean time the action, thus interposed and presented to his thoughts, acquires by degrees, and at length ingrosses, his whole attention. It becomes the important theme of the piece; or, at least, what follows sets out with the disadvantage of appearing to him, as a new and distinct subject.

But now, being related by way of episode, that is, as a succinct, summary narration, not made by the poet himself, but coming from the mouth of a person, necessarily engaged in the progress of the action, it serves for a short time to interrupt, and, by that interruption to sharpen, the eager expectation of the reader. It holds the attention, for a while, from the main point of view; yet not long enough to destroy that impatient curiosity, which looks forward to it. And thus it contributes to the same end, as a piece of miniature, properly introduced into a large

large picture. It amuses the eye with something relative to the painter's design, yet not so, as to with-hold its principal observation from falling on the greater subject. The parallel will not hold very exactly, because the painter is, of necessity, confined to the same *instant* of time; but it may serve for an illustration of my meaning. Suppose the painter to take, for his subject, that part of Æneas's story, where, with his *penates*, his *father*, and his *son*, he is preparing to set sail for Italy. To draw *Troy in flames*, as a constituent part of this picture, would be manifestly absurd. It would be painting two subjects, instead of one. And perhaps *Troja incensa* might seize the attention before

Ascanium Anchisenque patrem Teucrosque penates.
But a distant perspective of *burning Troy* might be thrown into a corner of the piece, that is, episodically, with good advantage; where, instead of distracting the attention, and breaking the unity of the subject, it would concenter, as it were, with the great design, and have an effect in augmenting the distress of it.

143. TU, QUID EGO ET POPULUS, &c.]
The connection is this. "But though the
"strict observance of these rules will enable the
"poet to conduct his *plot* to the best advantage,
"yet this is not *all* which is required to a *perfect*
"tragedy.

"tragedy. If he would seize the attention, and
 "secure the applause, of the audience, some-
 "thing further must be attempted. He must
 "(to return to the point, from which I digressed,
 "l. 127) be particularly studious to express the
 "manners. Besides the peculiarities of *office*,
 "temper, condition, country, &c. before considered,
 "all which require to be drawn with the utmost
 "fidelity, a singular attention must be had to
 "the characteristic differences of *age*."

Ætatis cujusque notandi sunt tibi mores.

The reason of this conduct is given in the commentary. It further serves to adorn this part of the epistle [which is wholly preceptive from line 89 to 202] with those beautiful pourtraitures of human life, in its several successive stages, which nature and Aristotle had instructed him so well to paint.

157. MOBILIBUSQUE DECOR NATURIS DANDUS ET ANNIS.]—MOBILIBUS] *non levibus aut inconstantibus, sed quæ variatis ætatibus immutantur.* Lambin.—NATURIS] By this word is not meant, simply, that instinctive *natural* bias, implanted in every man, to this or that character, but, in general, *nature*, as it appears diversified in the different periods of life. The sense will be: A certain *decorum* or propriety must be observed

served in painting the natures or dispositions of men varying with their years.

There is then no occasion for changing the text, with Dr. Bentley, into

Mobilibusque decor, maturis dandus et annis.

179. AUT AGITUR RES IN SCENIS, AUT ACTA REFERTUR, &c.] The connection is this. The *misapplication*, just now mentioned, destroys the *credibility*. This puts the poet in mind of another misconduct, which hath the same effect, viz. *intus digna geri promere in scenam*. But, before he makes this observation, it was proper to premise a *concession* to prevent mistakes, viz.

Segnius irritant animos, &c.

182. NON TAMEN INTUS DIGNA GERI PROMES IN SCENAM.] I know not a more striking example of the transgression of this rule, than in Seneca's *Hippolytus*; where Theseus is made to weep over the mangled members of his son, which he attempts to put together on the stage. This, which has so horrid an appearance in the *action*, might have been so contrived, as to have an infinite beauty in the *narration*; as may be seen from a similar instance in Xenophon's *Cyropædia*, where Panthea is represented putting together the torn limbs of Abradates.

185. NE PUEROS CORAM POPULO, &c.] Seneca, whom we before [l. 123] saw so solicitous to keep up to one rule of Horace, here makes no scruple to transgress another. For, in violation of the very letter of this precept, and of all the laws of decency and common sense, he represents Medea butchering her children in the face of the people; and, as if this too faintly painted the fury of her character, he further aggravates the cruelty of the execution, with all the horrors of a lingering act. This, seemingly inconsistent, conduct of the poet was, in truth, owing to one and the same cause, namely, "The endeavour to sustain Medea's character." For, wanting true taste to discern the exact boundaries which nature had prescribed to the human character, or true genius to support him in a due preservation of it, he, as all bad writers use, for fear of doing too little, unfortunately does too much; and so, as Shakespeare well expresses it, *o'ersteps the modesty of nature*, inflating her *sentiments* with extravagant passion, and blackening her *acts* with circumstances of unnatural horror. Though some of these faults, I suspect, he only copied. For, to say nothing of *that* of Ennius, Ovid's Medea was, at this time, very famous, and as, I think, may be collected from the judgment passed upon it by Quintilian, had some of the vices, here charged upon Seneca.

Ovidii

Ovidii Medea, says he, videtur mihi ostendere, quantum vir ille præstare potuerit, si ingenio suo temperare, quàm indulgere, maluisset. It is not possible indeed to say exactly, wherein this *intemperance* consisted; but it is not unlikely, that, amongst other things, it might shew itself in the forceries and incantations; a subject, entirely suited to the wildness of Ovid's genius; and which, as appears from his relation of this story in the *Metamorphosis*, he knew not how to treat without running into some excess and luxuriance in that part. But, whether this were the cause or no, the very treating a subject, which had gone through such hands, as Euripides, Ennius, and Ovid, was enough to expose a writer of better judgment, than Seneca, to some hazard. For, in attempting to outdo originals, founded on the plan of simple nature, a writer is in the utmost danger of running into affectation and bombast. And indeed, without this temptation, our writers have generally found means to incur these excesses; the very best of them being too apt to fill their plots with unnatural incidents, and to heighten their characters into caricatures. Though it may be doubted, whether this hath been owing so much to their own ill taste, as to a vicious compliance with that of the public; for, as one says, who well knew the expediency of this craft, and practised accordingly, *to write*
unnatural

unnatural things is the most probable way of pleasing them who understand not nature. [Dryd. Pref. to Mock Astrol.]

193. ACTORIS PARTES CHORUS, &c.] See also *Aristotle* [*ωsp. ωoint. x. ιη.*] The judgment of two such critics, and the practice of wise antiquity, concurring to establish this precept concerning the chorus, it should thenceforth, one would think, have become a fundamental rule and maxim of the stage. And so indeed it appeared to some few writers. The most admired of the French tragic poets ventured to introduce it into two of his latter plays, and with such success, that, as one observes, *It should, in all reason, have disabused his countrymen on this head: l'essai heureux de M. Racine, qui les [chœurs] a fait revivre dans ATHALIE et dans ESTHER, devoit, ce semble, nous avoir detrompez sur cet article.* [P. Brumoi, vol. i. p. 105.] And, before him, our *Milton*, who, with his other great talents, possessed a supreme knowledge of antiquity, was so struck with its use and beauty, as to attempt to bring it into our language. His *Sampson Agonistes* was, as might be expected, a master-piece. But even his credit hath not been sufficient to restore the chorus. Hear a late Professor of the art declaring, *De choro nihil differui, quia non est essentialis dramati, atque à neotericis penitus,* ET, ME
VOL. I. K JUDICE,

JUDICE, MERITO, REPUDIATUR. [Præl. Poet. vol. ii. p. 188.] Whence it hath come to pass that the chorus hath been thus neglected is not now the enquiry. But that this critic, and all such, are greatly out in their judgments, when they presume to censure it in the antients, must appear (if we look no further) from the double use, insisted on by the poet. For, 1. A *chorus* interposing, and bearing a part in the progress of the action, gives the representation that *probability* [d], and striking resemblance of real life, which every man of sense perceives, and *feels* the want of upon our stage; a want, which nothing but such an expedient as the chorus can possibly relieve. And, 2. The importance of its other office [l. 196] to the *utility* of the representation, is so great, that, in a moral view, nothing can compensate for this deficiency. For it is necessary to the truth and decorum of characters, that the *manners*, bad as well as good, be drawn in strong, vivid colours; and to that end that immoral sentiments, forcibly expressed and speci-

[d] Quel avantage ne peut il [le poëte] pas tirer d'une troupe d'acteurs, qui remplissent sa scene, qui rendent plus sensible la continuité de l'action, et qui la font paroître VRAISEMBLABLE, puisqu'il n'est pas naturel qu'elle se passe sans temoins. On ne sent que trop le vuide de notre Théâtre sans chœurs, &c. [Le Théâtre des Grecs, vol. i. p. 105.]

ously

ously maintained, be sometimes *imputed* to the speakers. Hence the sound philosophy of the chorus will be constantly wanting, to rectify the wrong conclusions of the audience, and prevent the ill impressions that might otherwise be made upon it. Nor let any one say, that the audience is well able to do this for itself: Euripides did not find even an Athenian theatre so quick-sighted. The story is well known, [Sen. Ep. 115.] that when this painter of the *manners* was obliged, by the rules of his art, and the character to be sustained, to put a run of bold sentiments in the mouth of one of his persons, the people instantly took fire, charging the poet with the *imputed* villainy, as though it had been his *own*. Now if such an audience could so easily misinterpret an attention to the truth of character into the real doctrine of the poet, and this too, when a chorus was at hand to correct and disabuse their judgments, what must be the case, when the *whole* is left to the sagacity and penetration of the people? The wiser sort, it is true, have little need of this information. Yet the reflexions of sober sense on the course and occurrences of the representation, clothed in the noblest dress of poetry, and enforced by the joint powers of *harmony* and *action* (which is the true character of the chorus) might make it, even to such, a no unpleasant or unprofitable entertain-

ment. But these *two* are a small part of the *uses* of the chorus; which in every light is seen so important to the truth, decorum, and dignity of the tragic scene, that the *modern* stage, which hath not thought proper to adopt it, is even, with the advantage of, sometimes, the justest moral painting and sublimest imagery, but a very faint shadow of the *old*; as must needs appear to those who have looked into the ancient models, or, divesting themselves of modern prejudices, are disposed to consult the dictates of plain sense. For the use of such, I once designed to have drawn into one view the several important benefits arising to the drama from the observance of this rule, but have the pleasure to find myself prevented by a sensible dissertation of a good French writer, which the reader will find in the VIII tom. of the *History of the Academy of Inscriptions and Belles Lettres*.—Or, it may be sufficient to refer the English reader to the late tragedies of ELFRIDA and CARACTACUS; which do honour to modern poetry, and are a better apology, than any I could make, for the ancient chorus.

193. OFFICIUMQUE VIRILE.] Heinsius takes *virile* adverbially for *viriliter*. But this is thought harsh. What hinders, but that it may be taken *adjectively*? And then, agreeably to his interpretation

interpretation, *officium virile* will mean a strenuous, diligent office, such as becomes a person interested in the progress of the action. The precept is levelled against the practice of those poets, who, though they allot the part of a *persona dramatis* to the *chorus*, yet for the most part make it so idle and insignificant an one, as is of little consequence in the representation: by which means the advantage of *probability*, intended to be drawn from this use of the *chorus*, is, in great measure, lost.

194. NEU QUID MEDIOS INTERCINAT ACTUS,
QUOD NON PROPOSITO, CONDUCAT ET HÆ-
REAT APTE.] How necessary this advice might be to the writers of the Augustan age cannot certainly appear; but, if the practice of Seneca may give room for any suspicion, it should seem to have been much wanted; in whom I scarcely believe there is one single instance of the chorus being employed in a manner consonant to its true end and character. To support this general censure, which may seem to bear hard on the poet, let us examine, in this view, one of the best of his plays, I mean, the *Hippolytus*; whose chorus, throughout, bears a very idle and uninteresting part—hath no share in the action—and sings impertinently.

At the end of the *first* act, when Phædra had avowed her passion for Hippolytus, instead of declaiming against her horrid purpose, enlarging on the danger and impiety of giving way to unnatural lusts, or something of this nature, which was surely the office of the chorus, it expatiates wantonly, and with a poetic luxuriance, on the sovereign, wide-extended powers of love.

In the close of the *second* act, instead of applauding the virtuous obstinacy of Hippolytus, and execrating the mad attempt of Phædra, it coolly sings the danger of beauty.

The *third* act contains the false accusation of Hippolytus, and the too easy deception of Theseus. What had the chorus to do here, but to warn against a too great credulity, and to commiserate the case of the deluded father? Yet it declaims in general, on the unequal distribution of *good* and *ill*.

After the *fourth* act, the chorus should naturally have bewailed the fate of Hippolytus, and revered the mysterious conduct of providence in suffering the cruel destiny of the innocent. This, or something like it, would have been to the purpose. But, as if the poet had never heard of this rule of *coherence*, he harangues, in defiance of common sense, on the instability of an high fortune, and the security of a low.

It

It will further justify this censure of *Seneca*, and be some amusement to the critical reader, to observe, how the several blunders, here charged upon him, arose from an injudicious imitation of *Euripides*.

I. There are two places in the Greek *Hippolytus*, which *Seneca* seems to have had in view in his first chorus. We will consider them both.

1. When the unhappy *Phædra* at length suffers the fatal secret of her passion to be extorted from her, she falls, as was natural, into all the horrors of self-detestation, and determines not to survive the confession of so black a crime. In this conjuncture, the *nutrix*, who is not drawn, as in modern tragedy, an unmeaning confidant, the mere depositary of the poet's secrets, but has real manners assigned to her, endeavours, with the highest beauty of character, to divert these horrid intentions, and mitigate, in some sort, the guilt of her passion, by representing to her the resistless and all-subduing force of love. "Venus," says this virtuous *monitrix*, "is not to be withstood, when she rushes upon us with all her power. Nor is any part of creation vacant from her influence. She pervades the air, and glides through the deeps. We, the inhabitants of the earth, are all subject to her dominion. Nay, ask of

"the ancient bards, and they will tell you, that
 "the gods themselves are under her controul."
 And so goes on, enumerating particular ex-
 amples, from all which she infers at last the ne-
 cessity of Phædra's yielding to her fate. Again,

2. Towards the close of the Greek play,
 when, upon receiving the tragical story of his
 son's sufferings, Theseus began to feel his re-
 sentments give way to the workings of paternal
 affection, and, on that account, though he was
 willing to conceal the true motive even from
 himself, had given orders for the dying Hippolytus
 to be brought before him, the chorus very pro-
 perly flings out into that fine address to Venus,

Σὺ τὰν θεῶν ἀκαμπτον φρένα, &c.

the substance of which is, "That Venus, with
 "her swift-winged boy, who traverses the earth
 "and ocean, subdues the stubborn hearts of gods
 "and men: inspiring into all, on whom her in-
 "fluence rests, whether inhabitants of the land
 "or deep, and more especially the race of man, a
 "soft and sympathizing tenderness; demonstrat-
 "ing hereby, that she alone extends her all-
 "controuling dominion over universal nature."
 This song, as thus connected with the occasion,
 is apparently very proper, and, when reduced
 from the pomp of lyric eloquence to plain prose,
 is only an address of congratulation to the
 powers

powers of love ; confessing and celebrating their influence, in thus softening the rigours of a father's hate, and awakening in his breast the soft touches of returning pity and affection.

Now these two places, taken together, are plainly the ground-work of that song,

Diva, non mihi generata ponto, &c.

but how improperly applied, has appeared, in respect of the latter of them, from what has been observed concerning the *occasion* ; and must be acknowledged of the other, from the different *character* of the person to whom it is given ; and also from hence, that the chorus in the Greek poet expressly condemns the impiety of such suggestions in the nurse, and admonishes Phædra not to lend an ear to them. The chorus, when it comes to sing in him, is far otherwise employed ; not in celebrating the triumphs, but deprecating the pernicious fury of this passion, and in lamenting the fatal miscarriages of Hymeneal love.

II. The second song, on the graces of the prince's person, and the danger of beauty, which follows on the abrupt departure of Hippolytus, rejecting, with a virtuous disdain, the mad attempts of Phædra and her confidante, is so glaringly improper, as not to admit an excuse from any example. And yet, I am afraid, the
single

single authority, it has to lean on, is a very short hint, slightly dropped by the chorus in the Greek poet on a very different occasion. It is in the entrance of that scene, where the mangled body of Hippolytus is brought upon the stage; on the sight of which the chorus very naturally breaks out,

Καὶ μὲν ὁ τάλας ὅδε δὴ σείχαι

Σάρκα^ς νεαρὰς

Ξανθὸν τε κάραι διαλυμανθείς.

and yet, as the reader of just taste perceives, nothing beyond a single reflexion could have been endured even here.

III. The next song of the chorus may seem directly copied from Euripides. Yet the two occasions will be found extremely different. In Seneca Theseus, under the conviction of his son's guilt, inveighs bitterly against him, and at last supplicates the power of Neptune to avenge his crimes. The chorus, as anticipating the effects of this imprecation, arraigns the justice of the gods. In the Greek poet, the father, under the like circumstances, invokes the same avenging power, and, as some immediate relief to his rage, pronounces the sentence of banishment, and urges the instant execution of it, against him. Hippolytus, unable to contend any longer with his father's fury, breaks out
into

into that most tender complaint (than which nothing was ever more affecting in tragedy)

Ἀρηρεν, ὡς ἔοικεν, ὦ τάλας ἐγώ, &c.

containing his last adieu to his country, companions, and friends. The chorus, touched with the pathos of this apostrophe, and commiserating his sad reverse of fortune, enters with him into the same excess of lamentation, and, as the first expression of it, lets fall this natural sentiment, "That, though from coolly contemplating
"the divine superintendency of human affairs,
"there results abundant confidence and security
"against the ills of life, yet when we look
"abroad into the lives and fortunes of men,
"that confidence is apt to fail us, and we find
"ourselves discouraged and confounded by the
"promiscuous and undistinguishing appointments of *good* and *ill*." This is the thought, which Seneca hath imitated, and, as his manner is, outraged in his chorus of the third act :

O magna parens, Natura, Deum, &c.

But the great difference lies here. That, whereas in *Euripides* this sentiment is proper and agreeable to the state and circumstances of the chorus, which is ever attentive to the progress of the action, and is most affected by what immediately presents itself to observation; in *Seneca* it is quite

quite foreign and impertinent; the attention of the chorus naturally turning, not on the distresses of Hippolytus, which had not yet commenced, but on the rashness and unhappy delusion of Theseus, as being that which had made the whole subject of the preceding scene. But the consequence of that delusion, it will be said, was obvious. It may be so. But the chorus, as any sensible spectator, is most agitated by such reflexions, as occur to the mind from those scenes of the drama, which are actually passing before it, and not from those which have not yet taken place.

IV. What was remarked of the *second* song of the chorus will be applicable to the *fourth*, which is absurdly founded on a single reflection in the Greek poet, but just touched in a couple of lines, though much more naturally introduced. Theseus, plunged in the deepest affliction, by the immature death of Phædra, and not enduring the sight of the supposed guilty author of it, commands him into banishment, "lest, as he goes on, "his former triumphs and successes against the disturbers of mankind, should "in consequence of the impunity of such unprecedented crimes, henceforth do him no "honour." The chorus, struck with the distressful situation of the old king, and recollecting

lecting with him the sum of his former glories,
is made to exclaim,

Οὐκ οἶδ' ὅπως εἶποιμ' ἂν εὐτυχεῖν τινα

Θνητῶν· τὰ γὰρ δὴ πρῶτ' ἀνέστανται πάλλιν.

i. e. *there is henceforth no such thing as human happiness, when the first examples of it are thus sadly reversed.* Which casual remark Seneca seizes, and extends through a whole chorus; where it visibly serves to no other end, but to usurp a place, destined for far more natural and affecting sentiments.

If I have been rather long upon this head, it is because I conceive this critique on the Hippolytus will let the reader, at once, into the true character of Seneca; which, he now sees, is that of a mere *declamatory moralist*. So little deserving is he of the reputation of a just dramatic poet.

196. ILLE BONIS FAVEATQUE, &c.] *The chorus*, says the poet, *is to take the side of the good and virtuous*, i. e. is always to sustain a moral character. But this will need some explanation and restriction. To conceive aright of its office, we must suppose the *chorus* to be a number of persons, by some probable cause assembled together, as witnesses and spectators of the great action of the drama. Such persons, as they cannot be wholly uninterested in what passes

before

before them, will very naturally bear some share in the representation. This will principally consist in declaring their sentiments, and indulging their reflexions freely on the several events and distresses as they shall arise. Thus we see the *moral*, attributed to the chorus, will be no other than the dictates of plain sense; such as must be obvious to every thinking observer of the action, who is under the influence of no peculiar partialities from *affection* or *interest*. Though even these may be supposed in cases, where the character, towards which they *draw*, is represented as virtuous.

A chorus, thus constituted, must always, it is evident, take the part of virtue; because this is the natural and almost necessary determination of mankind, in all ages and nations, when acting freely and unconstrained. But then it is to be observed,

1. That this moral character, or approbation of virtue, must also be considerably influenced by the common and established notions of *right* and *wrong*; which, though in essential points, for the most part, uniformly the same under all circumstances, yet will, in some particular instances, be much distorted by the corrupt principles and practices of different countries and times. Hence the *moral* of the stage will not be always strictly philosophical; as reflecting to us
the

the image, not of the sage's speculation, but, of the obvious sense of common, untutored minds. The reader will find this observation applied to the case of the *chorus* in the *Medea*, in note on line 200; and it might further, perhaps, be extended to the vindication of some others, to which the ignorant temerity of modern criticism hath taken occasion to object. But,

2. The *moral character* of the chorus will not only depend very much on the several mistaken notions and usages, which may happen, under different circumstances, to corrupt and defile *morality*; but allowance is also to be made for the *false policies*, which may prevail in different countries; and especially if they constitute any part of the subject, which the drama would represent. If the *chorus* be made up of free citizens, whether of a republic, or the milder and more equal royalties, they can be under little or no temptation to suppress or disguise their real sentiments on the several events, presented to their observation; but will be at liberty to pursue their natural inclination of speaking the truth. But should this venerable assembly, instead of sustaining the dignity of free subjects, be, in fact, a company of slaves, devoted by long use to the service and interests of a master, or awed, by the dread of tyrannical power, into an implicit compliance with his will, the baleful effect,

effect, which this very different situation must have on their moral character, is evident. Their opinions of persons and things will cease to be oracular; and the interposition of the *chorus* will be more likely to injure the cause of virtue, than to assist and promote it. Nor can any objection be made, on this account, to the conduct of the poet; who keeps to nature and probability in drawing the chorus with this imperfectly moral character; and is only answerable for his ill choice of a subject, in which such a pernicious representation is required. An instance will explain my meaning more perfectly. The chorus in the *Antigone*, contrary to the rule of Horace, takes the side of the *wicked*. It consists of a number of old Thebans, assembled by the order of Creon to assist, or rather to be present, at a kind of mock council; in which he meant to issue his cruel interdict of the rites of sepulture to the body of Polynices; a matter of the highest consequence in those days, and upon which the whole distress of the play turns. This veteran troop of vassals enter at once into the horrid views of the tyrant, and obsequiously go along with him in the projects of his cruelty; calmly, and without the appearance of any virtuous emotion, consenting to them all. The consequence is, that the interludes of the chorus
are,

are, for the most part, impertinent, or something worse; cautiously avoiding such useful reflexions, as the nature of the case must suggest, or indulging, by their flatteries, the impotent tyranny of their prince. And yet no blame can be fairly charged upon the great poet, who hath surely represented, in the most striking colours, the pernicious character, which a chorus, under such circumstances, would naturally sustain. The fault must therefore fall, where the poet manifestly intended to throw it, on the accursed spirit of despotism; which extinguishes, or over-rules, the suggestions of common sense; kills the very seeds of virtue, and perverts the most sacred and important offices, such as is that of the chorus, into the means and instruments of vice. The glory, which he designed, by this representation, to reflect upon the government and policy of his own state, is too glaring to be overlooked. And he hath artfully contrived to counter-act any ill impressions on the minds of the people, from the prostituted authority of the chorus, by charging them, in the persons of Hæmon and Antigone, with their real motives and views. In all indifferent things, in which the passions or interests of their master were not concerned, even this chorus would of course preserve a moral character. But we are to look for it no further.

This is the utmost verge and boundary of a slave's virtue. An important truth, which, among many greater, and more momentous instructions, furnishes this to the dramatic poet, "That, if he would apply the chorus to the uses of a found and useful moral, he must take his subjects, not from the annals of despotic tyranny, but from the great events, which occur in the records of free and equal commonwealths."

200. ILLE TEGAT COMMISSA.] This important advice is not always easy to be followed. Much indeed will depend on the choice of the subject, and the artful constitution of the fable. Yet, with all his care, the ablest writer will sometimes find himself embarrassed by the chorus. I would here be understood to speak chiefly of the moderns. For the antients, though it has not been attended to, had some peculiar advantages over us in this respect, resulting from the principles and practices of those times. For, as it hath been observed of the ancient epic muse, that she borrowed much of her state and dignity from the false *theology* of the pagan world, so, I think, it may be justly said of the ancient tragic, that she has derived great advantages of probability from its mistaken *moral*. If there be truth in this reflection, it will help to justify some of the ancient choirs, that have been most

objected to by the moderns. To give an instance or two, and leave the curious reader to extend the observation at his leisure.

I. In the Hippolytus of Euripides, the chorus, which is let into Phædra's design of killing herself, suffers this rash attempt to take effect, rather than divulge the entrusted secret. This, to a modern reader, seems strange; and we are ready to arraign the poet of having allotted a very unfit and unbecoming part to his *chorus*, which, in order to observe a *critical*, is thus made to violate a *moral* precept, or at least to sacrifice the more essential part of its character to a punctilio of honour. But the case was quite otherwise. This suicide of Phædra, which, on our strict moral plan, is repugnant to the plain rules of duty, was, in the circumstances supposed, fully justified on the pagan system. Phædra had confessed the secret of her criminal passion. By the forward zeal of her confidant, her disgrace is made known to Hippolytus; and thereby, as she conceives, rendered notorious to the public. In this distress, she had only one way to vindicate her honour, and that was at the expence of her life. Rather than bear the insupportable load of public infamy, she kills herself. That this was a justifiable cause of self-murder in the eye of the chorus is clear from the reason, there assigned, of her conduct, manifestly

in approbation of it. "Phædra," says the chorus,
 "oppressed and borne down by her afflictions,
 "has recourse to this expedient of suicide,

τάν τ' εὐδοξον ἀνθαισμέναν

Φάμαν, ἀπαλλάσσεσά

Τ' ἀλγειὸν φρενῶν ἔρωτα.

"for the sake of her good fame, and in order
 "to free herself from the tortures of a cruel
 "passion." And how agreeable this was to
 the pagan system, in general, let the reader col-
 lect from the following testimonies in Cicero :
*Si omnia fugiendæ turpitudinis adipiscendæque
 honestatis causâ faciemus, non modo stimulos doloris,
 sed etiam fulmina fortunæ contemnamus licebit :*
præsertim cum paratum sit illud ex hesternâ dispu-
tatione perfugium. Ut enim, si, cui naviganti præ-
dones insequantur, Deus quis dixerit, Ejice te navi ;
præsto est, qui excipiat, &c. omnem omittas timo-
rem ; sic, urgentibus asperis et odiosis doloribus, si
tanti non sint, ut ferendi sint, quo sit confugiendum
vides. [Tusc. Disp. l. ii. 26.] And, again, in
the close of the Vth disputation, Mibi quidem
in vita servanda videtur illa lex, quæ in Græcorum
conviviis obtinet : Aut bibat, inquit, aut abeat.
Et recte. Aut enim fruatur aliquis pariter cum
aliis voluptate potandi ; aut, ne sobrius in violentiam
vinolentorum incidat, ante discedat : sic INJURIAS
 FORTUNÆ,

FORTUNÆ, QUAS FERRE NEQUEAS, DEFUGI-
ENDO RELINQUAS.

II. Another example may, I think, be fetched from the *Medea*. Scarcely any thing has been more the subject of modern censure, than the part, which the chorus is made to act in this tragedy. *Whence comes it*, says M. Dacier, *that the chorus, which consists of Corinthian women, is faithful to a stranger against their sovereign* [e]?

[e] See also to the same purpose P. Corneille's *Exam. sur la Médée*. If the objection, made by these critics, to the part of the chorus, be, *the improbability*, as was explained at large in the preceding note, of a *slave's taking the side of virtue against the pleasure of his tyrant*, the manifest difference of the two cases will shew it to be without the least foundation. For, 1. the chorus in the *Medea* consists of women, whom compassion and a secret jealousy and indignation at so flagrant an instance of the violated faith of marriage, attach, by the most natural connexion of interests, to the cause and person of the injured queen. In the *Antigone*, it is composed of old courtiers, devoted, by an habitude of slavery, to the will of a master, assembled, by his express appointment, as creatures of his tyranny, and prompted, by no strong movements of self-love, to take part against him. 2. In the *Antigone*, the part of Creon is *principal*. Every step, in the progress of the play, depends so immediately upon him, that he is almost constantly upon the stage. No reflexions could therefore be made by the chorus, nor any part against him be undertaken, but directly in

This good Frenchman, it seems, thought it a kind of treason, even on the stage, and where a moral character was to be sustained, to take part against a tyrant. But he will further say, that the moral character of the chorus was forfeited in thus concealing, and, in effect, abetting the impious cruelties of Medea. *The laws of nature and of God were transgressed in rendering this service to her.* All which is very true, supposing the reader to judge of this matter by the purer christian moral. But how will he prove this to be the case on the received notions and practices of paganism? It appears, this critic did not apprehend, what a moderate attention to ancient history and manners might have taught him, that the violation of conjugal fidelity was a crime of that high nature, as to deserve his presence, and at their own manifest hazard. The very reverse of this is the case in the Medea. Creon is there but a subaltern person—has a very small part assigned him in the conduct of the play—is, in fact, introduced upon the stage but in one single scene. The different situation of the chorus, resulting from hence, gives occasion for the widest difference in their conduct. They may speak their resentments freely. Unawed by the frowns and menaces of their tyrant, they are left at liberty to follow the suggestions of virtue. Nothing here offends against the law of probability, or, in the least, contradicts the reasoning about the chorus in the Antigone.

in

in the public opinion, and to excuse, the severest vengeance of retaliation. This the laws expressly allowed to the injuries of the husband. And, it is probable, the wife might incline to think the reason of the case extended also to her. What is certain is, that we find some of the deepest scenes of horror, which ancient history furnishes, or ancient fiction could paint, wrought up from the occasion of this neglect of conjugal faith. And it is well observed by one, in speaking of the difference between the ancient and modern stage, that what is now held the fit subject of comic mirth and ridicule in christian theatres, was never employed but to stir up the utmost horror and commiseration, on the heathen. "We do not find," says this agreeable writer, "any comedy in so polite an author as Terence, "raised upon the violations of the marriage-bed. The falshood of the wife or husband "has given occasion to noble tragedies; but a "Scipio and Lælius would have looked upon "incest or murder, to have been as proper subjects for comedy." This is strictly and precisely the truth. And, therefore, as the crimes of incest or murder were believed deserving of the highest punishment by the Pagans, and every good man was ready to interest himself in seeing it inflicted [*f*]; so, in the case of the open vio-

[*f*] See note on line 127.

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lation of the marriage-compact, the fiercest acts of revenge were justified in the public opinion, and passed only for acts of strict justice. And for this, if we wanted further authority, we have the express word of the chorus. The Corinthian women do not barely consent to secrecy, in virtue of an extorted oath or promise (though more might have been said for this, than every reader is aware of) but in consequence of their entire and full approbation of her intentions. For thus, in answer to Medea's petition to them, without the least reserve or hesitation, they are made to reply,

Δράσω τὰδ'· ἐνδίκῃς γὰρ ἐκλίσῃ πόσιν
Μήδεια.

I will do it; for this revenge on a husband is just. We see then the chorus, in keeping the secret of Medea's murders, was employed in its great office of countenancing and supporting *salubrem justitiam, wholesome justice*. And, therefore, the scholiast, with M. Dacier's leave, gave a fit and proper account of the matter (so far was it from being *impious* and *ridiculous*) in saying, *that the Corinthian women being free, i. e. not devoted to the service of Creon by the special duties of any personal attachment, take the side of justice, as the chorus is wont to do on other occasions*. The circumstance of their *freedom* is properly mentioned,

For

For this distinguishes their case from that of the *nutrix*, who, upon receiving the account of Jason's cruelties, cries out,

Ὅλοιό μιν μὴ, δισπότης γὰρ ἐς' ἑμὸς,
Ἄλ' ἀρ' κακός γ' ὢν εἰς φίλους ἀλίσκῃται.

And that the chorus entered into Medea's designs against her husband, the tyrant Creon, and her rival, on reasons of justice and equity only, and not (as is hastily believed by some, who have not enough attended to the decorum of the ancient tragedy) for the sake of forwarding the poet's plot, may be certainly shewn. For when, in the fury of her resentments, and as the full completion of her revenge, the mother comes to propose the murder of her innocent children, the chorus starts with horror at the thought, dissuades her from it in the most earnest and affecting manner [g], and seems to have concealed the dreadful secret only from the persuasion, that it was too horrid and unnatural to be perpetrated. The reader will collect this

[g] *For her own sake, as is pleaded, and in obedience to the laws,*

Σί τ' ὠφελὴν θύεσσα, καὶ νόμοις βροτῶν

Ἐλλαμβάνουσα, δρᾷ σ' ἀπανήπω ταῖδε. ver. 812.

which shews, that the other murders were not against the spirit of the laws, whatever became of the letter of them,

with

with pleasure, by turning to the fine song, which follows. It may be further observed, that Medea herself, in opening this last purpose of her rage to the chorus, exacts fidelity of them only, *as they wished well to an injured queen, and were women*;

Εἴπερ φρονεῖς εὖ δεσπόταις, γυνή τ' ἔφες.

which is beautifully contrived by the poet, to discriminate the two cases, and to intimate to us, that reasons of justice were now no longer to be pleaded.

In sum, though these acts of severe avenging justice might not be according to the express letter of the laws, or the more refined conclusions of the PORCH or ACADEMY; yet there is no doubt, that they were, in the general account, esteemed fit and reasonable. And, it is to be observed, in order to pass a right judgment on the ancient chorus, that, though in virtue of their office, they were obliged universally to sustain a moral character; yet this moral was rather political and popular, than strictly legal or philosophic. Which is also founded on good reason. The scope and end of the ancient theatre being to serve the interests of virtue and society, on the principles and sentiments, already spread and admitted amongst the people, and not to correct old errors, and instruct them in philosophic truth.

202. TIBIA NON, UT NUNC, ORICHALCO, &c. from line 202 to 220.] This is one of those many passages in the epistle, about which the critics have said a great deal, without explaining any thing. In support of what I mean to offer, as the true interpretation, I observe,

That the poet's intention certainly was, not to censure the *false* refinements of their stage-music; but, in a short digressive history (such as the didactic form will sometimes require) to describe the rise and progress of the *true*. This I collect, 1. From *the expression itself*; which cannot, without violence, be understood in any other way. For, as to the words *licentia* and *præceps*, which have occasioned much of the difficulty, the *first* means a *freer use*, not a *licentiousness*, properly so called; and the *other* only expresses a vehemence and rapidity of language, naturally productive of a quicker elocution, such as must of course attend the more numerous harmony of the lyre:—not, as M. Dacier translates it, *une éloquence téméraire et outrée*, an extravagant straining and affectation of style. 2. From *the reason of the thing*; which makes it incredible, that the music of the theatre should then be most complete, when the times were barbarous, and entertainments of this kind little encouraged or understood. 3. From *the character*
of

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of that music itself; for the rudeness of which, Horace, in effect, apologizes in defending it only on the score of the imperfect state of the stage, and the simplicity of its judges. But what shall we say then to those lines,

Indoctus quid enim saperet liberque laborum,

Rusticus urbano confusus, turpis honesto?

which seem to imply a censure on these improvements, as unworthy the approbation of wise men; contrary to what I have just now supposed to be the scope of this whole passage.

On the strictest attention, I believe we are to understand them as a *sneer*, in passing, on what grave and philosophic men have observed of these refinements, which they constantly treat as *corruptions*. See note on line 218. But the mixed auditories of these days, says the poet with his usual *badinage*, were not so wise. It is, as if he had said, "What I mention here as an improvement in dramatic music is, in the ideas and language of some grave men, an abuse and perversion of it to immoral purposes. It may be so: but consider, for what sorts of people these theatrical entertainments were designed; for the ignorant clown and citizen, the plebeian and gentleman, huddled together into one confused mass, and crowding to the theatre, on a holiday, for some relief from their ordinary toils and occupations.

And

And alas, what do these men know, or consider,
of this austere *wisdom*?

But the cast of the whole passage is, besides, such as favours the supposition of an intended irony. Hence the *tibia non, ut nunc, orichalco vincla*, &c. delivered in the usual tone of declaimers against modern manners. Hence the epithets, *frugi castusque verecundusque*, to denote the quality of those who assisted, of old, at these *virtuous* entertainments. And hence the enormity of that state of things, when the people were afterwards permitted to regale on holidays, *impune*. This intention too accounts for the terms *licentia, luxuries, facundia, præceps*, and others, which, being of ambiguous interpretation, the poet purposely chose, to mimic, and humour, as it were, the objectors in their favourite language on this occasion. Till at last, impatient to continue the raillery any further, he concludes at once with an air of solemnity very proper to confound the impertinence of such criticism,

Utiliumque sagax rerum, et divina futuri
Sortilegis non discrepuit sententia Delphis.

All this the reader sees is agreeable to the poet's *prescription* elsewhere,

— Sermone opus est tristi, sæpe jocos.

and

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and indeed to his own *practice* on an hundred occasions. So that on the whole there is little doubt of his intention in the lines,

Indoctus quid enim *saperet*, &c.

At least, in this view, the poet, I am apt to think, will be found intelligible, and even elegant. Whereas, on any other supposition of his numerous commentators, I cannot see that the verses before us (as they here stand) have either propriety or common sense.

The interpretation then of this whole passage, from line 202 to 220, will stand thus. "The
" tibia, says the poet, was at first *low* and *simple*.
" The *first*, as best agreeing to the *state of the*
" *stage*, which required only a soft music to go
" along with, and assist the chorus; there being
" no large and crouded theatres to *fill* in those
" days. And the *latter*, as suiting best to the
" *state of the times*; whose simplicity and frugal
" manners exacted the severest temperance, as in
" every thing else, so, in their dramatic orna-
" ments and decorations. But, when conquest
" had enlarged the territory, and widened the
" walls of Rome; and, in consequence thereof,
" a social spirit had dispelled that severity of
" manners, by the introduction of frequent
" festival solemnities; then, as was natural to
" expect, a freer and more varied harmony took
" place.

" place. Nor let it be objected, that this *freer*
 " *harmony* was itself an abuse, a corruption of
 " the severe and *moral* music of ancient times.
 " Alas! we were not as yet so *wise*, to see the
 " inconveniencies of this improvement. And
 " how should we, considering the nature and
 " end of these theatrical entertainments, and
 " the sort of men of which our theatres were
 " made up? But, leaving the philosopher to
 " speculate at his ease on this matter, thus, in
 " *fact*, it was, that the *Tibicen*, the musician,
 " who played to the declamation in the acts, in-
 " stead of the rude and simpler strain of the old
 " times, gave a richness and variety of tone;
 " and, instead of the old inactive posture, added
 " the grace of motion to his art. Just in the
 " same manner, continues he, it happened to
 " the *lyre*, i. e. *the music in the chorus*, which
 " originally, as that of the *tibia*, was severe
 " and simple; but, by degrees, acquired a
 " quicker and more expressive modulation, such
 " as corresponded to the more elevated and pas-
 " sionate turn of the poet's style, and the diviner
 " enthusiasm of his sentiment." All that is fur-
 " ther wanting to support and justify this inter-
 " pretation, will be found in the notes on parti-
 " cular passages.

203. TENUIS SIMPLEXQUE, &c.] It may here be observed of the manner, in which the poet hath chosen to deliver this whole part [from line 202 to 295] that, besides its other uses, it tends directly to convey to his readers, and impress upon them in the strongest manner, the principal instruction he has in view, and with which the epistle more expressly concludes, *viz. The uses and importance of a spirit of critical application.* For, in speaking of the *stage music*, of the *satyrs*, and the *Greek tragedy* (all which come naturally in his way, and are very artfully connected) he chuses to deduce the account of each from its ruder and less polished original; tracing it through its several successive stages, and marking out to us the gradual polish and refinement, which it acquired from increasing diligence and correctness. The *tibia* at first was *simple and rude*—The *satyrs* *naked and barbarous*—and the *Greek tragedy* *itself deformed and shapeless* in the cart of *Thespis*. Care and attention reformed each. It follows,

Nil intentatum nostri liquere poetæ, &c.

i. e. our poets have not been wanting in their attempts to excel in these several particulars. What is necessary to their success is, *limæ labor et mora*. If the reader bear this in mind, it will help

help him to see the order and scope of this part more distinctly.

204. *ASPIRARE ET ADESSE CHORIS, &c.*] *Chorus* here means the whole dramatic performance, which was originally nothing else.

206. *UTPOTE PARVUS, ET FRUGI CASTUSQUE VERECUNDUSQUE, &c.*] *M. Dacier* finds here *four causes of the little regard the ancients had for plays* [he should have said, of their being satisfied with the *tibia*, all rude and simple as is here described] *la première, que le peuple Romain étoit encore alors en petit nombre : la seconde, qu'il étoit sage : la troisième, qu'il étoit chaste, c'est à dire pieux : et la quatrième, qu'il étoit modeste.* But the three last epithets are synonymous, all of them expressing what, though he took three guesses for it, he had the ill fortune to miss at last, *that plainness and simplicity of character, that frugal reserve and moderation in the use of any thing,* which so essentially belongs to rude minds, uninstructed in the arts of life. His *four causes* are, in fact, then but two; which have been fully considered in note on line 202.

211. *ACCESSIT NUMERISQUE MODISQUE LICENTIA MAJOR.*] *M. Dacier* takes *licentia major* in a bad sense, as implying *lascivety, a culpable and*

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M

licentious

licentious refinement. But the *licence*, here spoken of, with regard to *numbers* and *sounds*, like that in another place, which respects *words* [line 51.] is one of those, which is allowed, when *sumpta pudenter*. The comparative *major*, which is a *palliative*, shews this; and is further justified by a like passage in *Cicero, De Oratore*, [l. iii. c. 48.] where, speaking of this very licence in poetry, he observes, that out of the Heroic and Iambic measure, which were at first strictly observed, there arose by degrees the Anapæst, *procerior quidam numerus, et ille licentior et divitior Dithyrambus*; evidently not condemning this change, but opposing it to the rigorous and confined measure of the elder poets. But the expression itself occurs in the piece entitled *Orator*, in which, comparing the freedoms of the poetical and oratorial style, *in ea* [i. e. *poetica*] says he, *licentiam statuo majorem esse, quam in nobis, faciendorum jungendorumque verborum*. The poet says, this licence extended *numeris modisque*, the former of which words will express that *licence of metre*, spoken of by *Cicero*, and which is further explained line 256, &c. where an account is given of the improvement of the Iambic verse.

214. SIC PRISCAE, — — — ARTI

TIBICEN, &c.

SIC FIDIBUS ETIAM, &c.]

This

This is the application of what hath been said, in general, concerning the refinement of theatrical music to the case of *tragedy*. Some commentators say, and to *comedy*. But in this they mistake, as will appear presently. M. Dacier hath I know not what conceit about a comparison betwixt the *Roman* and *Greek* stage. His reason is, *that the lyre was used in the Greek chorus, as appears, he says, from Sophocles playing upon this instrument himself in one of his tragedies.* And was it not used too in the Roman chorus, as appears from Nero's playing upon it in several tragedies? But the learned critic did not apprehend this matter. Indeed from the caution, with which his guides, the dealers in antiquities, always touch this point, it should seem, that they too had no very clear conceptions of it. The case I take to have been this: The *tibia*, as being most proper to accompany the declamation of the acts, *cantanti succinere*, was constantly employed, as well in the Roman tragedy as comedy. This appears from many authorities. I mention only two from Cicero. *Quam multa [Acad. l. ii. 7.] quæ nos fugiunt in cantu, exaudiunt in eo genere exercitati: Qui, primo inflatu Tibicinis, Antiopam esse aiunt aut Andromacham, cum nos ne suspicemur quidem.* The other is still more express. In his piece, entitled *Orator*, speaking of the negligence of the Roman

writers; in respect of *numbers*, he observes, *that there were even many passages in their tragedies, which, unless the TIBIA played to them, could not be distinguished from mere prose: quæ, nisi cum Tibicen accesserit, orationi sint soluta simillima.* One of these passages is expressly quoted from *Thyestes*, a tragedy of *Ennius*; and, as appears from the measure, taken out of one of the acts. It is clear then, that the *tibia* was certainly used in the *declamation* of tragedy. But now the song of the tragic chorus, being of the nature of the ode, of course required *fides*, the lyre, the peculiar and appropriated instrument of the lyric muse. And this is clearly collected, if not from express testimonies; yet from some occasional hints dropt by the antients. For, 1. the lyre, we are told, [*Cic. De Leg. ii. 9. & 15.*] and is agreed on all hands, was an instrument of the Roman theatre; but it was not employed in comedy. This we certainly know from the short accounts of the music prefixed to Terence's plays. 2. Further, the *tibicen*, as we saw, accompanied the declamation of the acts in tragedy. It remains then, that the proper place of the lyre was, where one should naturally look for it, in the songs of the chorus; but we need not go further than this very passage for a proof. It is unquestionable, that the poet is here speaking of the chorus only; the following

lines

lines not admitting any other possible interpretation. By *fidibus* then is necessarily understood the instrument peculiarly used in it. Not that it need be said that the *tibia* was never used in the chorus. The contrary seems expressed in a passage of Seneca, [Ep. lxxxiv.] and in Julius Pollux [l. iv. 15. § 107.] It is sufficient, if the *lyre* was used solely, or principally, in it at this time. In this view, the whole digression is more pertinent, and connects better. The poet had before been speaking of tragedy. All his directions, from l. 100, respects this species of the drama only. The application of what he had said concerning music, is then most naturally made, 1. to the *tibia*, the music of the acts; and, 2. to *fides*, that of the choir: thus confining himself, as the tenor of this part required, to tragedy only. Hence is seen the mistake, not only of M. Dacier, whose comment is in every view insupportable; but, as was hinted, of Heinsius, Lambin, and others, who, with more probability, explained this of the Roman comedy and tragedy. For, though *tibia* might be allowed to stand for comedy, as opposed to *tragædia*, [as in fact, we find it in l. ii. Ep. 1. 98.] that being the only instrument employed in it; yet, in speaking expressly of the music of the stage, *fides* could not determinately enough, and in contradistinction to *tibia*, denote that of

tragedy, it being an instrument used solely; or principally, in the chorus; of which, the context shews, he alone speaks. It is further to be observed, that, in the application here made, besides the music, the poet takes in the other improvements of the tragic chorus, these happening, as from the nature of the thing they would do, at the same time.

214. SIC PRISCAE MOTUMQUE ET LUXURIEM.] These two words are employed to express that *quicker movement*, and *richer modulation* of the new music; the peculiar defects of the *old* being, 1. That it moved too slowly, and 2. That it had no compass or variety of notes. It was that *movement*, that velocity and vehemence of the music, which Roscius required to have slackened in his old age.

215. TRAXITQUE VAGUS PER PULPITA VESTEM.] This expresses not only the improvement arising from the ornament of proper dresses, but from the grace of motion: not only the *actor*, whose peculiar office it was, but the *minstrel* himself, as appears from hence, conforming his gesture in some sort to the music.

Of the use and propriety of these gestures, or dances, it will not be easy for us, who see no such things attempted on the modern stage, to form

form any very clear or exact notions. What we cannot doubt of is, 1. That the several theatrical dances of the antients were strictly conformable to the genius of the different species of composition, to which they were applied. 2. That, therefore, the tragic dance, which more especially accompanied the chorus, must have been expressive of the highest gravity and decorum, tending to inspire ideas of what is *becoming*, *graceful*, and *majestic*; in which view we cannot but perceive the important assistance it must needs lend to virtue, and how greatly it must contribute to set all her graces and attractions in the fairest light. 3. This idea of the ancient tragic dance, is not solely formed upon our knowledge of the conformity beforementioned; but is further collected from the name usually given to it, which was Ἐμμέλεια. This word cannot well be translated into our language; but expresses all that grace and concinnity of motion, which the dignity of the choral song required. 4. Lastly, it must give us a very high notion of the moral effect of this dance, when we find the severe Plato admitting it into his commonwealth.

216. SIC FIDIBUS ETIAM VOCES, &c.] He is here speaking of the great improvement in

the tragic chorus, after the Roman conquests, when the Latin writers began to enquire

Quid Sophocles et Theſpis et Æſchylus utile ferrent.

This improvement conſiſted, 1. In a more inſtructive moral ſentiment: 2. In a more ſublime and animated expreſſion; which of courſe produced, 3. A greater vehemence in the declamation: to which conformed, 4. A more numerous and rapid muſic. All theſe particulars are here expreſſed, but, as the reaſon of the thing required, in an inverted order. The muſic of the lyre (that being his ſubject and introducing the reſt) being placed firſt, the declamation, as attending that, next; the language, *facundia*, that is, the ſubject of the declamation, next; and the ſentiment, *ſententia*, the ground and baſis of the language, laſt.

Et tulit eloquium inſolitum facundia præcepſ.

literally, “A vehemence and rapidity of language produced an unuſual vehemence and rapidity of elocution in the declaimer!” This “rapidity of language” is exactly the ſame, as that Cicero ſpeaks of in Democritus and Plato, [*Orat.* 638. *Elz.*] which, becauſe of its quick and rapid movement, *quod incitatus feratur*, ſome critics thought to be poetical. *Unaccuſtomed*, we may obſerve, is indifferently a *cenſure* or *encomium*, according as the preceding ſtate

state of the thing spoken of was *wrong*, or *right*. Much the same may be concluded of *præcept*; its *literal* sense is a degree of *motion* in any thing above what it had before. This may be *excessive*, or otherwise, as it chanceth: When applied to the bleak East wind, dispersing a flight of bees, and dashing them on the stream,

si forte morantes

Sparserit, aut præcept Neptune immerserit Euris.

Virg. Georg. iv. 29.

the epithet implies *excess*; but when spoken of the gentle South, whose strongest gale is but sufficient to drive the willing ship to port, [Æn. vii. 410.] *Præcipiti delata Notis*, it then only expresses *due* measure.

As for the criticism from Quintilian, who opposes *præcipitia* to *sublimibus*, it is doubly impertinent: 1. As the sense is necessarily fixed by its opposition to *sublimibus*: and, 2. As the word is here used, not as implying *motion*, but *height*, in which view its sense is *absolute*, and always denotes *excess*.

218. UTILIUMQUE SAGAX RERUM, ET DIVINA FUTURI, SORTILEGIS NON DISCREPUIT SENTENTIA DELPHIS.] It is amazing that these two lines should ever have been misunderstood as a censure, the import of them being
highly

highly *encomiastic*, yet with great exactness declaring the specific boast and excellence of the chorus; which lay, as Heinſius hath well obſerved, 1. In inculcating important moral leſſons; and, 2. In delivering uſeful preſages and monitions concerning future conduct, with an almoſt oracular prudence and authority.

SIC PRISCAE — — — ARTI.

What hath chiefly miſſed the critics in their explanation of this place, I ſuſpect to have been the frequent encomiums on the ſeverity of the ancient muſic, by the Greek and Latin writers. Though here they ſeem to have overlooked two very material conſiderations: 1. That the *former* have chiefly treated the ſubject in a *moral* or *political* view, and therefore preferred the ancient muſic only as it was conceived to influence the public manners. For this reaſon Plato, one of the chief of thoſe *encomiaſts*, applauds, as we find, the practice of *Ægypt*, in ſuffering no change of her poetry, but continuing, to his time, her fondneſs for the *Songs of Iſis* [De Leg. l. ii. ſub init.] which juſt as much infers the perfection of thoſe ſongs, conſidered in a critical view, as Rome's ſticking to her *Saliar verſes* would have ſhewn thoſe poor, obſcure oriſons to have exceeded the regular odes and artificial compositions of Horace. And it was this kind of

criticiſm

erticism which, as I suppose, the poet intended to expose in the famous verses, which I explain in note on line 202. 2. That the *latter*, the principal of them at least, who talk in the same strain, lived under the Emperors; in whose time, indeed, music had undergone a miserable prostitution, *being broken*, as one of the best of those writers complains, *into an effeminate and impure delicacy*—*In scenis effeminata et impudicis modis fracta*, [Quinct. l. i. 10.] As to the times in question, I know but of one passage, which clearly and expressly condemns the music then in vogue; and that will admit of some alleviation from its being found in a treatise concerning laws. The passage I mean is in Cicero, [De Leg. l. ii. 15.] who, following Plato in his high-flown principles of legislation, exclaims, *Illa quæ solebant quondam compleri severitate jucunda Livianis et Nævianis modis; nunc ut eadem exultent, cervices oculosque pariter cum MODORUM FLEXIONIBUS torqueant!* For the *severitas jucunda* of the music, to which Livius's plays were set, it may be tolerably guessed from hence, that he was the *first* who brought a written play upon the stage; *i. e.* the first writer, whose plays were acted to a regular and precomposed music. And it is not, we know, very usual for the first essays in any art to be perfect. It should seem then, that the *flexiones modorum*, as opposed to the

the plainness of the old music, are here condemned, not so much in the view of a critic, estimating the true state of the stage; but, as was hinted, of a legislator, treading in the steps of Plato. Though indeed I have no doubt that the music in those times was much changed, and had even suffered some degree of corruption. This I infer, not so much from any express authorities that have occurred, as from the general state of those times, which were degenerating apace into the worst morals, the sure forerunners of a corrupt and vitiated music; for, though it may indeed, in its turn, and doubtless does, when established, contribute much to help on the public depravity, yet that depravity itself is originally not the *effect*, but the *cause*, of a bad music; as is more than hinted to be Cicero's real opinion in the place referred to, where, observing that the manners of many Greek states had kept pace with their music, he adds, that they had undergone this change, *Aut hac dulcedine corruptelaque depravati, ut quidam putant; aut cum severitas eorum ob alia vitia cecidisset, tum fuit in auribus animisque mutatis etiam huic mutationi locus.* [Leg. ii. 15.] But be this as it will, Horace, as we have seen, is no way concerned in the dispute about the ancient music.

219. SENTENTIA DELPHIS.] *Sententia* is properly an aphorism taken from life, briefly representing either what is, or what ought to be, the conduct of it : *Oratio sumpta de vita, quæ aut quid sit, aut quid esse oporteat, in vita, breviter ostendit.* [Ad Herenn. Rhet. l. iv.] These aphorisms are here mentioned, as constituting the peculiar praise and beauty of the chorus. This is finely observed, and was intended to convey an oblique censure on the practice of those poets, who stuff out every part of the drama alike with moral sentences, not considering, that the only proper receptacle of them is the chorus, where indeed they have an extreme propriety; it being the peculiar office and character of the chorus to moralize. In the course of the action they should rarely be used; and that for the plain reason assigned by the author just quoted, [for the rule holds on the stage, as well as at the bar] *Ut rei actores, non vivendi præceptores, esse videamur.* That there was some ground for this reproof of the Roman drama, is collected from the few remaining fragments of the old Latin plays, which have much of this sententious cast, and from what Quintilian expressly tells us of the old Latin poets, whose fame, it seems, was principally raised upon this merit. *Tragædiæ scriptores, Accius et Pacuvius, clarissimi gravitate sententiarum,*

sententiarum, &c. [l. x. c. i.] To how intolerable an extreme this humour of moralizing in plays was afterwards carried, Seneca has given us an example.

But here a question will be started, "Why then did the Greeks moralize so much, or, if we condemn *Accius* and *Seneca*, how shall we defend *Sophocles* and *Euripides*?" An ingenious [b] modern hath taken some pains to satisfy this difficulty, and in part, I think, hath succeeded. His solution, in brief, is, "That the moral and political aphorisms of the Greek stage, generally contained some apt and interesting allusion to the state of public affairs, which was easily caught by a quick, intelligent auditory; and not a dry, affected moral, without further meaning, as for the most part was that of the Latins." This account is not a little confirmed by particular instances of such acknowledged allusions, as well as from reflections on the genius and government of the Athenians, at large. But this, though it goes some way, does not fully extricate the matter. The truth is, these sentences are too thick sown in the Greek writers, to be fully accounted for from the single consideration of their demo-

[b] P. Brumoy, Disc. sur le parall. des Theat. p. 165. Amst. 1732.

eratical views. Not to observe, that the very choice of this *medium* for the conveyance of their political applications, presupposes the prior acknowledged use and authority of it. I would then account for it in the following manner.

I. In the virtuous simplicity of less polished times, this spirit of moralizing is very prevalent; the good sense of such people always delighting to shew itself in sententious or proverbial γνῶμαι, or observations. Their character, like that of the clown in Shakespeare, is *to be very swift and sententious*. [As you like it, Act v. sc. 1.] This is obvious to common experience, and was long since observed by the *philosopher*, οἱ ἄγροικοὶ μάλιστα γνωμολύποι εἰσὶ, καὶ ῥαδίως ἀποφαίνονται, [Arist. Rhet. l. ii. c. 21.] an observation, which of itself accounts for the practice of the elder poets in Greece, as in all other nations. A custom, thus introduced, is not easily laid aside, especially when the oracular cast of these sentences, so fitted to *strike*, and the moral views of writers themselves (which was more particularly true of the old dramatists) concurred to favour this taste. But, 2. there was added to this, more especially in the age of Sophocles and Euripides, a general prevailing fondness for moral wisdom, which seems to have made the fashionable study of men of all ranks in those days; when schools of philosophy were resorted

resorted to for recreation as well as instruction, and a knowledge in morals was the supreme accomplishment in vogue. The fruit of these philosophical conferences would naturally shew itself in certain brief, sententious conclusions, which would neither contradict the fashion, nor, it seems, offend against the ease and gaiety of conversation in those times. *Schools* and *pe-dantry*, *morals* and *austerity*, were not so essentially connected, in their combinations of ideas, as they have been since; and a sensible moral truth might have fallen from any mouth, without disgracing it. Nay, which is very remarkable, the very *scholia*, as they were called, or drinking catches of the Greeks, were seasoned with this moral turn; the fallies of pleasantry, which escaped them in their freest hours, being tempered, for the most part, by some strokes of this national sobriety. "During the course of their entertainments," says Athenæus, [l. xv. c. 14.] "they loved to hear, from some wise and prudent person, an agreeable song: and those songs were held by them most agreeable, which contained exhortations to virtue, or other instructions relative to their conduct in life."

And to give the reader a taste of these *moral* songs, I will take leave to present him with a very fine one, written by no less a person than
Aristotle

Aristotle himself; and the rather, as I have it in my power to present him, at the same time, with an elegant translation of it. But its best recommendation will be, that it comes from the same hand which has so agreeably entertained us of late with some spirited imitations of Horace [k].

Ἀρεῖα πολύμοχθε γένει βροτῆϊ,
 Θήραμα κάλλισον βίῳ.
 Σᾶς πέρι, Παρθένη, μορφᾶς
 Καὶ θανέν ζηλωτὸς ἐν Ἑλλάδι πτότμος,
 Καὶ πόνους τλῆναι μαλερὲς ἀκάμαϊας.
 Τοῖον ἐπὶ φρένα βάλλεις καρπὸν εἰς αἰθέρην,
 Χρυσῆ τε κρέσσω καὶ γονέων,
 Μαλακαυγητοῖό δ' ὕπνῳ.
 Σὺ δ' ἔνεκ' ἐκ Διὸς Ἡρακλῆος
 Λήδας τε κῆροι πόλλ' ἀνέτλασαν,
 Ἔργοις σὰν ἀγορεύουσιν δύναιμι.
 Σοῖς τε πόθοις Ἀχιλλεύς
 Αἴας τ' αἶδαο δόμους ἤλθον.
 Σᾶς δ' ἔνεκα φίλῃ μορφᾶς
 Ἀταρνέως ἐνὶ ροφῷ
 Ἀελίῃ χήρωσεν αὐγάς.
 Τοίγαρ αἰοίδιμον ἔργοις,

[k] *Imitations of Horace*, by Thomas Nevile, M. A.
 Fellow of Jesus College, Cambridge, 1758.

Ἀθάναν τε μιν αὐξήσῃ μῦσαι,

Μναμοσύνας Δύγαρες,

Διὸς ξενίς σέβας αὐξήσῃ

Φιλίας τε γέρας βεβαίῃς [1].

[1] There is a considerable difference in the copies of this ode, as given us in the best editions of Athenæus and Diogenes Laërtius. But the *SIXTH* verse is, in all of them, so inexplicable, in respect of the *measure*, the *construction*, and the *sense*, that I have no doubt of its being extremely corrupt. In such a case one may be indulged in making conjectures. And the following one, by a learned person, exactly skilled in the proprieties as well as elegancies of the Greek language, is so reasonable, that I had almost ventured to give it a place in the text.

The poet had been celebrating, line 3, the divine *form* of virtue; which inspired the Grecian youth with an invincible courage and contempt of danger. It was natural therefore to conclude his panegyric with some such epiphonema as this: "Such a passion dost thou kindle up in the minds of men!"

To justify this passion, he next turns to the *fruits*, or advantages, which virtue yields; which, he tells us, are more excellent than those we receive from any other possession, whether of *wealth*, *nobility*, or *ease*, the three great idols of mankind. Something like this we collect from the obscure glimmerings of sense that occur to us from the common reading;

Τοῖον ἐπὶ φρίκα βάλλεις καρπὸν τ' εἰς ἀθάναν,

Χερσὶν τε κρείσσον, &c.

But it is plain, then, that a very material word must have dropt out of the *first* part of the line, and that

I. Hail,

I.

Hail, Virtue! goddess! sovereign good,
 By man's bold race with pain pursued!
 Where'er thou dart'st thy radiant eye,
 Greece sees her sons with transport fly;
 Danger before thee disappears,
 And death's dark frown no terror wears.

II.

So full into the breast of man descends
 Thy rich ambrosial shower;
 A shower, that gold, that parents far transcends,
 Or, sleep's soft-soothing power.

III.

By thee ALCIDES soar'd to fame,
 Thy influence LEDA's twins proclaim:

there is an evident corruption in the *last*. In a word,
 the whole passage may be reformed thus,

Τοῖον ἐπὶ φρεν' ἔρωτα βάλλεις.

Καρπὸν ΦΕΡΕΙΣ ἀθάνατον

Κρυσὴν τε κρόσσον καὶ γοιῶν,

Μαλακαυγηϊοῦ δ' ὕπνου.

It need not be observed how easily καρπὸν ΤΕΕΙΣ is changed into καρπὸν ΦΕΡΕΙΣ: And as to the restored word *ἔρωτα*, besides the necessity of it to complete the sense, it exactly suits with σοῖς τε πόθοις in line 12. Lastly, the *measure* will now sufficiently justify itself to the learned reader.

180 NOTES ON THE

Heroes for thee have dauntless trod
 The dreary paths of hell's abode;
 Fir'd by thy form, all beamy bright,
 Atarneus' nursling left the light.

IV.

His deeds, his social love (so will the Nine,
 Proud to spread wide the praise
 Of friendship and of friendly Jove) shall shine
 With ever-living rays.

This moralizing humour, so prevalent in those times, is, I dare be confident, the true source of the sententious cast of the Greek dramatic writers, as well as of that sober air of moral, which, to the no small disgust of modern writers, is spread over all their poets. Not but there would be some difference in those poets themselves, and in proportion as they had been more or less conversant in the academy, would be their relish of this moral mode; as is clearly seen in the case of Euripides, that philosopher of the stage, as the Athenians called him, and who is characterized by Quintilian, as *sententiis densus, et in iis, quæ a sapientibus tradita sunt, pæne ipsis par.* [L. x. c. 1.] Yet still the fashion was so general, that no commerce of the world could avoid, or wholly get clear of it; and therefore Sophocles, though his engagements in the state kept

kept him at a greater distance from the schools, had yet his share of this philosophical humour. Now this apology for the practice of the Greek poets doth by no means extend to the Roman; philosophy having been very late, and never generally, the taste of Rome.

Cicero says, *Philosophia quidem tantum abest ut proinde, ac de hominum est vitâ merita, laudetur, ut a plerisque neglecta, a multis etiam vituperetur.* In another place he tells us, that in his time Aristotle was not much known, or read, even by the philosophers themselves. [*Cic. Top. sub init.*]

And, though in the age of Seneca, *sentences*, we know, were much in use, yet the cast and turn of them evidently shew them to have been the affectation of the lettered *few*, and not the *general* mode and practice of the time. For the quaintness, in which Seneca's aphorisms are dressed, manifestly speaks the labour and artifice of the closet, and is just the reverse of that easy, simple expression, which clothes them in the Greek poets, thus demonstrating their familiar currency in common life. Under any other circumstances than these, the practice, as was observed, must be unquestionably faulty; except only in the chorus, where, for the reason before given, it may always, with good advantage, be employed.

220. CARMINE QUI TRAGICO, &c.] The connexion with line 201, from whence the poet had digressed, is worth observing. The digression had been taken up in describing the improved state of dramatic music; the application of which to the case of tragedy, brings him round again to his subject, the tragic chorus; to which alone, as hath been observed, the two last lines refer. This too is the finest preparation of what follows. For to have passed on directly from the *tibia* to the *satires*, had been abrupt and inartificial; but from *tragedy* the transition is easy, the *satires* being a species of the tragic drama. That it was so accounted, may be seen from the following passage in Ovid,

*Est et in obscænos deflexa tragædia risus,
Multaque præteriti verba pudoris habet.*

Trist. lib. ii. 409.

For the *tragedy*, here referred to, cannot be the regular Roman tragedy. That he had distinctly considered before, and, besides, it in no age admitted, much less in this, of which we are speaking, so intolerable a mixture. As little can it be understood of the proper Atellane fable, for besides that Ovid is here considering the *Greek* drama only, the Atellane was ever regarded as a species, not of tragedy, but comedy: The authority of Donatus is very express; "*Comæ-*
"*diarum*

“*diarum formæ sunt tres: Palliatæ, Togatæ, Atellanæ, salibus et jocis compositæ, quæ in se non habent nisi vetustam elegantiam.*” [Prol. in Terent.] And Athenæus [l. vi.] speaking of some pieces of this sort, which L. Sylla had composed, calls them *σατυρικὰς κωμωδίας*, satiric comedies; *comedies*, because, as Donatus says, “*salibus et jocis compositæ:*” and *satiric*, not that satires were introduced in them, but, according to Diomedes, from their being “*argumentis dictisque similes satyricis fabulis Græcis.*” Of what then can Ovid be understood to speak, but the true satiric piece, which was always esteemed, and, as appears from the Cyclops, in fact is, what Demetrius [*περὶ ἑρμηνείας*] elegantly calls it, *τραγῳδία παιζέουσα*, a lighter kind of *tragedy*; the very name, which Horace, as well as Ovid in this place, gives to it? But this is further clear from the instance quoted by Ovid, of this loose tragedy; for he proceeds,

*Nec nocet autori, mollem qui fecit Achillem,
Infregisse suis fortia facta modis.*

which well agrees to the idea of a satiric piece, and, as Vossius takes notice, seems to be the very same subject which, Athenæus and others tell us, Sophocles had worked into a satiric tragedy, under the title of *Ἀχιλλέως ἑρασταί*.

221. MOX ETIAM, &c.] It is not the intention of these notes to retail the accounts of others. I must therefore refer the reader, for whatever concerns the history of the satiric, as I have hitherto done of the tragic and comic drama, to the numerous dissertators on the ancient stage; and, above all, in the case before us, to the learned Casaubon; from whom all that hath been said to any purpose, by modern writers, hath been taken. Only it will be proper to observe one or two particulars, which have been greatly misunderstood, and without which it will be impossible, in any tolerable manner, to explain what follows.

I. The design of the poet, in these lines, is not to fix the origin of the satyric piece, in ascribing the invention of it to Thespis. This hath been concluded, without the least warrant from his own words, which barely tell us, "that the representation of tragedy was in elder Greece followed by the *satires*;" and indeed the nature of the thing, as well as the testimony of all antiquity, shews it to be impossible. For the *satire* here spoken of is, in all respects, a regular drama, and therefore could not be of earlier date than the times of Æschylus, when the constitution of the drama was first formed. It is true indeed, there was a kind of entertainment of much greater antiquity, which by the
antients

antients is sometimes called *satiric*, out of which (as Aristotle assures us) tragedy itself arose, ἡ δὲ τραγωδία, διὰ τὸ ἐκ σατυρικῆς μεταβαλεῖν, ὅψε ἀπεσεμνώθη, [περ. ποιητ. κ. δ.] But then this was nothing but a chorus of satyrs [Athenæus, l. xiv.] celebrating the festivals of *Bacchus*, with rude songs and uncouth dances; and had little resemblance to that which was afterwards called *satiric*; which, except that it retained the chorus of satyrs, and turned upon some subject relative to *Bacchus*, was of a quite different structure, and, in every respect, as regular a composition as tragedy itself.

II. There is no doubt but the poem, here distinguished by the name of SATYRI, was in actual use on the Roman stage. This appears from the turn of the poet's whole criticism upon it. Particularly, his address to the Pisos, l. 235, and his observation of the offence which a loose dialogue in this drama would give to a *Roman* auditory, l. 248, make it evident that he had, in fact, the practice of his own stage in view. It hath, however, been questioned, whether by *Satyri* we are to understand the proper Greek *satires*, or the Latin *Atellane* fable, which, in the main of its character, very much resembled that drama. If the authority of Diomedes be any thing, the *former* must be the truth, for he expressly

pressly asserts, "that the satiric and Attelane pieces, though similar in the general cast of their composition, differed in this essential point, that the persons in the former were satyrs, in the other; not." [L. iii. c. De poem. gen.] Now the poet expressly tells us the persons in the drama he is here describing, were *Satyrs*, and accordingly delivers rules for the regulation of their characters. As to the *Atellane*, according to the way in which Vossius reads the words of Diomedes, the characters were *Oscan*, *personæ Oscæ*, which is very probable, not so much for the reasons assigned by this critic (for they are indeed very frivolous), but because, as it should seem from a passage in Strabo, [Lib. v. 233.] the language of the *Osci* was used in these *Atellanes*, and therefore common sense would require, that the persons also introduced should be *Oscan*. The difficulty is, to know how it happened, that in a work written purposely to reform the Roman stage, the poet should say nothing of one species, the *Atellane*, which was of great authority and constant use at Rome, and yet say so much of another, the *satires*, which was properly a Greek entertainment, and certainly much less cultivated by the Roman poets. The plain solution of the matter is, that, when now the Romans were become acquainted with the Greek models, and had

had applied themselves to the imitation of them, these Oscan characters were exchanged for the Greek satires, which they before resembled in the main parts of their character; and which appear, on other occasions, to have been no strangers at Rome; as we collect from the Sileni and Satyrs making a part (as Dionysius relates it) in their triumphal processions. So that this change of the Oscan persons for *Satyrs* is to be considered only as an improvement of the old *Atellane*, and not the introduction of an entirely new drama. In every other respect, the precepts here given for the regulation of the *Satyrs* are such as would equally serve to improve the *Atellane*. The probable reason why the poet chose to insist so much on this alteration, or rather why he laboured so strenuously to *support* it, will be given in its place. In the mean time, supposing his view to have been this of countenancing the introduction of *satiric persons* into the *Atellane* (and that they were, in fact, introduced, we learn from an express authority [m]) every thing said on the subject will not only be pertinent and agreeable to what is here taught to be the general tenor of the epistle, but will be seen to have an address and contrivance,

[m] *Agite, fugite, quatite, Satyri*: A verse cited from one of these Latin satires by Marius Victorinus.

which

which will very much illustrate this whole part, and recommend it to the exact reader.

But, before I quit this subject of the Atellane fable, it will be proper to observe, That when I every where speak of it, as of early original, and ancient use on the Roman stage, I am not unmindful that Velleius Paterculus speaks of Pomponius as the inventor of this poem; which, if taken in the strict sense, will bring the date of it very low. “Sane non ignoremus eadem ætate fuisse Pomponium, sensibus celebrem, verbis rudem, et novitate inventi a se operis commendabilem.” L. ii. c. 9. For the age he is speaking of is that of SYLLA. But the authorities for the high antiquity of the Atellane fable are so express, that, when Pomponius is called the *inventor* of it, it is but as Horace calls Lucilius the inventor of the Roman satire. That is, he made so considerable a change in the form and conduct of this poem, as to run away with all the honour of it. The improvements made by Lucilius in satire, have been taken notice of in the *Introduction*. And it happens that a curious passage in Athenæus will let us into the improvements made by Pomponius in the Atellanæ.

But first we are to understand, that this sort of entertainment, as the name speaks, was imported to Rome from ATELLA, a town of the
Osci

Osci in Campania; and that the dialect of that people was constantly and *only* used in it, even when the Osci themselves had ceased to be a people. This we learn from Strabo. ΟΣΚΩΝ ἐκλειπομένων, ἡ διάλεκτος μένει παρὰ τοῖς Ῥωμαίοις ὥς τε καὶ ποιήματα σκηνοβαλεῖσθαι κατὰ τινὰ ἀγῶνα πάτριον καὶ μιμολογεῖσθαι. L. v. 233.

The OSCAN language, we see, was made use of in the Atellane plays, just as the Welsh, or some provincial dialect, is often employed in our comedies.

But now we learn from Athenæus, that L. Sylla wrote some of these Atellanes in the ROMAN LANGUAGE. ὑπ' αὐτῆ γραφεῖσαι σατυρικὰ καὶ κωμῳδία Τῇ ΠΑΤΡΩΩ ΦΩΝῃ. [L. vi. p. 261. Ed. Casaub.] The difficulty then clears up. For the Pomponius whom Velleius speaks of was contemporary with L. Sylla. So that, to give any propriety to the term of *inventor*, as applied to Pomponius, we must conclude that he was the *first* person who set this example of composing Atellane plays in the vulgar dialect: which took so much, that he was even followed in this practice by the Roman General. This account of the matter perfectly suits with the encomium given to Pomponius. He would naturally, on such an alteration, endeavour to give this buffoon sort of comedy a more rational cast:

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cast: And this reform of itself would entitle him to great honour. Hence the *SENSIBUS CELEBRIS* of Paterculus [n]. But to preserve some sort of resemblance (which the people would look for) to the old Atellane, and not to strip it of all the pleasantry arising from the barbarous dialect, he affected, it seems, the *antique* in the turn of his expression. Hence the other part of his character (which in the politer age of Paterculus grew offensive to nice judges) *VERBIS RUDIS*.

The conclusion is, That the Atellane fable was in its first rude form and Oscan dialect of ancient use at Ronte, where it was admitted, as Strabo speaks, *KATA TINA AIΩNA ΠΑΤΡΙΩΝ*: That Pomponius afterwards *reformed* its barbarities, and brought it on the stage in a *Roman* dress; which together were thought so

[n] This, I think, must be the interpretation of *sensibus celebrem*, supposing it to be the true reading. But a learned critic has shewn with great appearance of reason, that the text is corrupt, and should be reformed into *sensibus CELEREM*. According to which reading, the encomium here past on Pomponius must be understood of his *wit*, and not the gravity of his moral sentences. Either way his title to the honour of invention is just the same.—See a specimen of a new edition of Paterculus in *BIBLIOTHEQUE BRITANNIQUE*, *Juillet, &c.* 1736.

great improvements, that later writers speak of him as the INVENTOR of this poem. But to return to our proper subject, the *Greek satires*.

III. For the absolute merit of these satires, the reader will judge of it himself by comparing the Cyclops, the only piece of this kind remaining to us from antiquity, with the rules here delivered by Horace. Only it may be observed, in addition to what the reader will find elsewhere [n. l. 223.] apologized in its favour, that the double character of the satires admirably fitted it, as well for a sensible entertainment to the wise, as for the sport and diversion of the vulgar. For, while the grotesque appearance and jesting vein of these fantastic personages amused the one, the other saw much further; and considered them, at the same time, as replete with science, and informed by a spirit of the most abstruse wisdom. Hence important lessons of civil prudence, interesting allusions to public affairs, or a high, refined moral, might, with the highest probability, be insinuated, under the slight cover of a rustic simplicity. And from this instructive cast, which from its nature must be very obscure, if not impenetrable, to us at this day, was, I doubt not, derived the principal pleasure which the ancients found in this species of the drama. If the modern reader would conceive any thing of the nature and degree

degree of this pleasure, he may in part guess at it, from reflecting on the entertainment he himself receives from the characters of the clowns in Shakespeare; *who*, as the poet himself hath characterized them, *use their folly, like a stalking horse, and, under the presentation of that, shoot their wit.* [As you like it.]

221. AGRESTIS SATYROS, &c.] It hath been shewn, that the poet could not intend, in these lines, to *fix the origin of the satiric drama*. But, though this be certain, and the dispute concerning that point be thereby determined, yet it is to be noted, that he purposely describes the satire in its ruder and less polished form; glancing even at some barbarities, which deform the Bacchic chorus; which was properly the satiric piece, before Æschylus had, by his regular constitution of the drama, introduced it under a very different form on the stage. The reason of this conduct is given in *n.* on l. 203. Hence the propriety of the word *nudavit*, which Lambin rightly interprets, *nudos introduxit satyros*, the poet hereby expressing the monstrous indecorum of this entertainment in its first unimproved state. Alluding also to this ancient character of the *satire*, he calls him *asper*, i. e. rude and petulant; and even adds, that his jests were intemperate, and without the *least mixture*

of

of gravity. For thus, upon the authority of a very ingenious and learned critic, I explain *incolumi gravitate*, i. e. rejecting every thing serious, bidding *farewell*, as we say, to *all gravity*. Thus [L. iii. O. 5.]

Incolumi Jove et urbe Roma :

i. e. bidding farewell to Jupiter [Capitolinus] and Rome; agreeably to what is said just before;

Anciliorum et nominis et togæ

OBLITUS; *æternæque Vestæ.*

or, as *SALVUS* is used still more remarkably in Martial [l. v. 10.]

Ennius est lectus SALVO tibi, Roma, Marone :

Et sua riserunt secula Mæonidem.

Farewell, all gravity, is as remote from the original sense of the words *fare well*, as *incolumi gravitate* from that of *incolumis*, or *salvo Marone* from that of *salvus*.

223. INLECEBRIS ERAT ET GRATA NOVITATE MORANDUS SPECTATOR—] The poet gives us in these words the reason why such gross ribaldry, as we know the Atellanes consisted of, was endured by the politest age of Rome. Scenical representations, being then intended, not as in our days, for the entertainment of the better sort, but on certain great so-

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lemnities,

lemnities, indifferently for the diversion of the whole city, it became necessary to consult the taste of the multitude, at well as of those, *quibus est equus, et pater et res.*

And this reason is surely sufficient to vindicate the poet from the censure of a late critic, who has fallen upon this part of the epistle with no mercy. "The poet," says he, "spends a great number of verses about these satires; but the subject itself is unworthy his pen. He, who could not bear the elegant mimes of Laberius, that he should think this farcical and obscene trash, worth his peculiar notice, is somewhat strange." I doubt not, it appeared so to this writer, who neither considered the peculiar necessity of the satiric piece, nor attended to the poet's purpose and drift in this epistle. The former is the more extraordinary, because he hath told us, and rightly too, "that, to content the people, the satiric was superadded to the tragic drama." And he quotes a passage from Diomedes, which gives the same account: *Satyros induxerunt ludendi causa jocandique, simul ut spectator inter res tragicas seriasque satyrorum quoque jocis et ludis deleteretur.* Should not this have taught him, that what was so requisite to content the people, might deserve some notice from the poet? This *farcical trash* was chiefly calculated for those who, without the *enticement of*

so agreeable a change in the entertainment of the day, would not have had patience to fit out the tragedy; which being intended for the gratification of the better sort, *urbani et honesti*, they, in their turn, required to be diverted in the only way which was to the level of their taste, that of farce and pleasantry. And this, I dare be confident, so great a patron of liberty, as this writer, will agree with me in thinking to be but reasonable in a free state; which ought to make some provision for the *few*, that may chance, even under such advantages, to want a truly critical spirit. I hold then, that Horace acted, not only in the character of a good critic, but of a prudent man, and good citizen, in attempting to refine, what it had not been equitable, or, was not in his power, wholly to remove. But, 2. the learned critic as little attended to the drift of the epistle, as to the important use and necessity of the satiric drama. He must otherwise have seen, that, in an essay to improve and regulate the Roman theatre (which is the sole purpose of it) the poet's business was to take it as it then stood, and to confine himself to such defects and abuses, as he found most likely to admit a correction, and not, as visionary projectors use, to propose a thorough reform of the public taste in every instance. The *Atellanes* had actual possession of the stage, and, from their antiquity,

antiquity, and other prejudices in their favour, as well as from the very design and end of their theatrical entertainments, would be sure to keep it. What had the poet then, in these circumstances, to do, but, in pursuance of his main design, to encourage a reformation of that entertainment, which he was not at liberty absolutely, and under every shape, to reject? This he judged might most conveniently be done by adopting the Greek *satires*, instead of their own *Oscan* characters. With this change, though the Atellanes might not, perhaps, be altogether to his own taste, yet he hoped to render it a tolerable entertainment to the better sort. And this, in fact, it might have been by following the directions here given; part of which were intended to free it from that *obscene and farcical trash*, which appears to have been no less offensive to the poet, than to this critic.

As for the so much applauded *mimes*, they had not, it is probable, at this time gained a footing on the stage, sufficient to entitle them to so much consideration. This was a new upstart species of the drama, which, though it had the common good fortune of absurd novelties, to take with the great; yet was generally disapproved by men of better taste, and better morals. Cicero had passed a severe censure upon it in one of his epistles, [Ad Famil. ix. 16.] which intimates,

intimates, that it was of a more buffoon and ridiculous composition, than their Atellanes; whose place it began to be the fashion to supply with this ribaldry. And we collect the same thing from what Ovid observes of it in apology for the looseness of his own verses,

Quid si scripsissem MIMOS obscæna jocantes,

Qui semper vetiti crimen amoris habent?

Nec satis incestis temerari vocibus aures,

Assuescunt oculi multa pudenda pati.

Trist. lib. ii. 497.

Horace, with this writer's leave, might therefore judge it better to retain the Atellanes under some restrictions, than adopt what was much worse. But the mimes of Laberius were quite another thing. They were all elegance. So J. Scaliger [Comment. de Comœd. & Tragœd. c. vi.] and, after him, this writer, tells us; but on no better grounds, than that he wrote good Latin (though not always that, as may be seen in A. Gellius, l. xvi. c. 7.) and hath left a few elegant moral scraps behind him. But what then? the kind of composition was ridiculous and absurd, and, in every view, far less tolerable than the *satires* under the regulation of Horace. The latter was a regular drama, consisting of an entire fable, conducted

according to the rules of probability and good sense, only dashed with a little extravagance for the sake of the mob. The character of the former hath been given above, from unquestionable authorities. Accordingly Diomedes [iii. p. 488, ed. Putsch.] defines it to be *an irreverent and lascivious imitation of obscene acts—mimus est sermonis cujuslibet motus sine reverentia, vel factorum et turpium cum lascivia imitatio*. And Scaliger himself owns *veri mimi proprium esse quædam sordida ut affectet*, loc. cit. It seems, in short, to have been a confused medley of comic drollery on a variety of subjects, without any consistent order or design; delivered by one actor, and heightened with all the licence of obscene gesticulation. Its best character, as practised by its greatest master, Laberius, was that of being witty in a very bad way [Sen. Controv. l. iii. c. 18.] and its sole end and boast, *risu diducere rictum* [Hor. i. S. x. 7.] which, whatever virtue it may be, is not always a proof of much elegance. But I have spent too many words on a criticism, which the ingenious author, I am persuaded, let fall unawares, and did not mean to give us as the result of a mature and well-weighed deliberation on this subject.

225. VERUM ITA RISORES, &c.] The connecting particle, *verum*, expresses the opposition intended between the original satire and that which the poet approves. For, having insinuated the propriety of the satiric shews, as well from the practice of Greece, as the nature of festival solemnities, the poet goes on to animadvert on their defects, and to prescribe such rules, in the conduct of them, as might render them a tolerable diversion, even to the better sort. This introduction of the subject hath no small art. For, there being at this time (as hath been shewn) an attempt to bring in the Greek satires, while the Atellane plays (as was likely) still held the affections of the people, the poet was not openly to reproach and discredit these; but, by a tacit preference, to support and justify the other. This is done with address. For, instead of criticising the Atellanes, which came directly in his way, after having closed his account of the Roman tragedy, he relates, as it were, incidentally, the practice of ancient Greece in exhibiting satyrs, and thence immediately passes on, without so much as touching on the other favourite entertainment, to offer some directions concerning the satiric drama.

227. NE QUICUNQUE DEUS, QUICUNQUE ADHIBEBITUR HEROS, &c.] Gods and heroes were introduced as well into the satiric as tragic drama, and often the very same gods and heroes, which had borne a part in the preceding tragedy: a practice, which Horace, I suppose, intended by this hint, to recommend as most regular. This gave the serious, tragic air to the satire. The comic arose from the *risor* and *dicax*, who was either a satyr himself, or some character of an extravagant, ridiculous cast, like a satyr. Of this kind, says Diomedes, from whom I take this account, are Autolychus and Burris: which last particular I mention for the sake of justifying a correction of the learned Casaubon. This great critic conjectured, that, instead of *Burris*, in this place, it should be read *Busiris*. His reason is "*nam Burris iste ex Græcorum poetis mihi non notus.*" which reason hath more force, than appears at first sight. For the very nature of this diversion required, that the principal character of it should be well known, which it was scarce likely to be, if not taken from a common story in their poets. But Vossius objects, "*sed non ea fuerit persona ridicula.*" contrary to what the grammarian represents it. But how so? Busiris was a savage inhospitable tyrant, who sacrificed strangers.

And

And what should hinder this character from being made ridiculous, as well as Polyphemé in the Cyclops? Their characters were not unlike. And, as is seen in that case, the antients knew to set forth such monsters of cruelty in a light, that rendered them equally absurd and detestable. This was agreeable to their humanity, which, by such representations, loved to cultivate a spirit of benevolence in the spectators; and shews the moral tendency of even the absurdest of the ancient dramatic shews. The objection of Vossius is then of no weight. But what further confirms the emendation of the excellent Casaubon, is a manuscript note on the margin of a printed copy of this book [o], which I have now by me, as it should seem, from his own hand, "*lectionem vero quam restituimus etiam in optimo codice Puteano postea invenimus.*" The learned reader will therefore, henceforth, look upon the text of *Diomedes*, in this place, as fully settled.

229. MIGRET IN OBSCURAS, &c.—AUT, DUM VITAT, &c.] The two faults, cautioned against, are, 1. a too low, or vulgar expression, in the comic parts; and, 2. a too sublime one,

[o] In the library of Emmanuel College, Cambridge.

in

in the tragic. The *former* of these faults would almost naturally adhere to the first essays of the Roman satires, from the buffoon genius of the old Atellane: and the *latter*, from not apprehending the true measure and degree of the tragic mixture. To correct both these, the poet gives the exactest idea of the satyrs, in the image of a Roman matron, sharing in the mirth of a religious festival. The occasion obliged to some freedoms; and yet the dignity of her character demanded a decent reserve.

234. NON EGO INORNATA, &c.] The scope of these lines may be to regulate the satiric style, by the idea of its character, before given, in the allusion to a Roman matron. Conformably to that idea, a plain, unornamented expression [from line 234 to 236.] must not always be used. The three following lines enforce this general application by example.

If the exact reader find himself dissatisfied with this gloss, which seems the only one the words, as they now stand, will bear, he may, perhaps, incline to admit the following conjecture, which proposes to read, instead of *inornata*, *honorata*. I. The context, I think, requires this change. For the two faults observed above [line 229, 30.] were, 1. a too low expression, and, 2. a too lofty. Corresponding to this
double

double charge, the poet having fixed the idea of this species of composition [231, 2, 3.] should naturally be led to apply it to both points in question: 1. to the comic part, in prescribing the true measure of its condescension, and, 2. to the tragic, in settling the true bounds of its elevation. And this, according to the reading here offered, the poet doth, only in an inverted order. The sense of the whole would be this,

1. *Non ego HONORATA et dominantia nomina
solum*

Verbaque, Pisones, satyrorum scriptor amabo:

i. e. in the tragic scenes, I would not confine myself to such words only, as are in honour, and bear rule in tragic and the most serious subjects; this stateliness not agreeing to the condescending levity of the satire.

2. *Nec sic enitar tragico differre colori,
Ut nihil intersit Davusne loquatur, et audax
Pythias, emuncto lucrata Simone talentum,
An custos famulusque Dei Silenus alumni.*

i. e. nor, on the contrary, in the comic scenes, would I incur the other extreme of a too plain and vulgar expression, this as little suiting its inherent matronlike dignity. But, II. this correction improves the *expression* as well as the *sense*. For besides the opposition, implied in the
the

the disjunctive, *neq*, which is this way restored, *dominantia* hath now its genuine sense, and not that strange and foreign one forced upon it out of the Greek language. As connected with *honorata*, it beomes a metaphor, elegantly pursued; and hath too a singular propriety, the poet here speaking of figurative terms. And then, for *honorata* itself, it seems to have been a familiar mode of expression with Horace. Thus [2 Ep. ii. 112.] *honore indigna vocabula* are such words as have *parum splendoris* and are *sine pondere*. And “*quæ sunt in honore vocabula*” is spoken of the contrary ones, such as are fit to enter into a serious tragic composition, in this very epistle, line 71.

240. *EX NOTO PICTUM, &c.*] This precept [from line 240 to 244] is analagous to that before given [line 129] concerning tragedy. It directs to form the satires out of a known subject. The reasons are, in general, the same for both. Only one seems peculiar to the satires. For the cast of them being necessarily romantic, and the persons those fantastic beings called satyrs, the *το ὁμοιον*, or probable, will require the subject to have gained a popular belief, without which the representation must appear unnatural. Now these subjects, which have gained a popular belief, in consequence of old tradition, and their frequent

frequent celebration in the poets, are what Horace calls *nota*; just as newly-invented subjects, or, which comes to the same thing, such as had not been employed by other writers, *indicta*, he, on a like occasion, terms *ignota*. The connexion lies thus. Having mentioned *Silenus* in line 239, one of the commonest characters in this drama, an objection immediately offers itself; “but “what good poet will engage in subjects and “characters so trite and hacknied?” The answer is, *ex noto fictum carmen sequar*, i. e. however trite and well-known this and some other characters, essential to the satyr, are, and must be; yet will there be still room for fiction and genius to shew itself. The conduct and disposition of the play may be wholly new, and above the ability of common writers, *tantum series juncturaque pollet*.

244. SYLVIS DEDUCTI CAVEANT, &c.] Having before [line 232] settled the true idea of the satiric style in general, he now treats of the peculiar language of the satyrs themselves. This common sense demands to be in conformity with their sylvan character, neither affectedly tender and gallant, on the one hand; nor grossly and offensively obscene, on the other. The *first* of these cautions seems levelled at a false improvement, which, on the introduction of the

Roman satire, was probably attempted on the simple, rude plan of the Greek, without considering the rustic extraction and manners of the fauns and satyrs. The *latter* obliquely glances at the impurities of the Atellane, whose licentious ribaldry, as hath been observed, would, of course, infect the first essays of the Roman satire.

But these rules, so necessary to be followed in the *satiric*, are (to observe it by the way) still more essential to the PASTORAL poem: the fortunes and character of which (though numberless volumes have been written upon it) may be given in few words.

The prodigious number of writings, called Pastoral, which have been current in all times, and in all languages, shews there is something very taking in this poem. And no wonder, since it addresses itself to THREE leading principles in human nature, THE LOVE OF EASE, THE LOVE OF BEAUTY, and THE MORAL SENSE: such pieces as these being employed in representing to us the TRANQUILLITY, the INNOCENCE, and the SCENERY, of the rural life. But, though these ideas are of themselves agreeable, good sense will not be satisfied unless they appear to have some foundation in truth and nature. And even then, their impression will be
but

but faint, if they are not, further, employed to convey instruction, or interest the heart.

Hence the different forms, under which this poem hath appeared. THEOCRITUS thought it sufficient to give a reality to his pictures of the rural manners. But in so doing it was too apparent, that his draught would often be coarse and unpleasing. And, in fact, we find that his shepherds, contrary to the poet's rule,

— *immunda crepent ignominiosaque dicta.*

VIRGIL avoided this extreme. Without departing very widely from the simplicity of rustic nature, his shepherds are more decent, their lives more serene, and, in general, the scene more inviting. But the refinements of his age not well agreeing to these simple delineations, and his views in writing not being merely to entertain, he saw fit to allegorize these agreeable fancies, and make them the vehicles of historical, and sometimes even of philosophic, information.

Our SPENSER wanted to engross all the beauties of his masters; and so, to the artless and too natural drawing of the Greek, added the deep allegoric design of the Latin, poet.

One easily sees that this ænigmatic cast of the pastoral was meant to give it an air of instruction, and to make it a reasonable entertainment

tainment to such as would nauseate a sort of writing,

“Where pure description held the place of
“sense.”

But this refinement was out of place, as not only inconsistent with the simplicity of the pastoral character, but as tending to rob us in a good degree of the *pleasure*, which these amusing and picturesque poems are intended to give.

Others therefore took another route. The famous TASSO, by an effort of genius which hath done him more honour than even his epic talents, produced a new kind of pastoral, by ingrafting it on the drama. And under this form, pastoral poetry became all the vogue. The charming AMINTAS was even commented by the greatest scholars and critics. It was read, admired, and imitated, by all the world.

There is no need to depreciate the fine copies that were taken of it, in Italy. But those by our own poets were, by far, the best. SHAKESPEARE had, indeed, set the example of something like pastoral dramas, in our language; and in his *Winter's Tale*, *As ye like it*, and some other of his pieces, has enchanted every body with his natural sylvan manners, and sylvan scenes. But FLETCHER set himself, in earnest, to emulate the Italian, yet still with an eye of reverence

reverence towards the English, poet. In his *faithful shepherdess* he surpasses the *former*, in the variety of his paintings, and the beauty of his scene; and only falls short of the *latter*, in the truth of manners, and a certain original grace of invention which no imitation can reach. The fashion was now so far established, that every poet of the time would try his hand at a pastoral. Even surly BEN, though he found no precedent for it among his antients, was caught with the beauty of this novel drama, and, it must be owned, has written above himself in the fragment of his *sad shepherd*.—The scene, at length, was closed with the *Comus* of MILTON, who, in his rural paintings, almost equalled the simplicity and nature of Shakespeare and Fletcher, and, in the purity and splendor of his expression, outdid TASSO.

In this new form of the pastoral, what was childish before, is readily admitted and excused. A simple *moral* tale being the groundwork of the piece, the charms of description, and all the embellishments of the scene, are only subservient to the higher purpose of picturing the manners, or touching the heart.

But the good sense of Shakespeare, or perhaps the felicity of his genius, was admirable. Instead of the deep tragic air of Tasso (which has been generally followed) and his continu-

ance of the pastoral strain, even to satiety, through *five* acts, he only made use of these playful images to enrich his comic scenes. He saw, I suppose, that pastoral subjects were unfit to bear a tragic distress. And besides, when the distress rises to any height, the wantonness of pastoral imagery grows distasteful. Whereas the genius of comedy admits of humbler distresses; and leaves us at leisure to recreate ourselves with these images, as no way interfering with the draught of characters, or the management of a comic tale. But to make up in *surprize* what was wanting in *passion*, Shakespeare hath, with great judgment, adopted the popular system of Faeries; which, while it so naturally supplies the place of the old sylvan theology, gives a wildness to this sort of pastoral painting, which is perfectly inimitable.

In a word, if Tasso had the honour of inventing the *pastoral drama*, properly so called, Shakespeare has shewn us the just application of *pastoral poetry*; which, however amusing to the imagination, good sense will hardly endure, except in a short dialogue, or in some occasional dramatic scenes; and in *these* only, as it serves to the display of characters and the conduct of the poet's plot.

And to confirm these observations on pastoral poetry, which may be thought too severe, one
may

may observe that such, in effect, was the judgment passed upon it by that great critic, as well as wit, CERVANTES. He concludes his famous adventures, with a kind of project for his knight and 'squire *to turn shepherd*: an evident ridicule on the turn of that time for pastoral poems and romances, that were beginning to succeed to their books of heroic knight-errantry. Not but it contains, also, a fine stroke of *moral criticism*, as implying, what is seen from experience to be too true, that men capable of running into one enthusiasm are seldom cured of it but by some sudden diversion of the imagination, which drives them into another.

In conclusion, the reader will scarcely ask me, why, in this deduction of the history and genius of pastoral poetry, I have taken no notice of what has been written of this kind, in France; which, if it be not the most *unpoetical* nation in Europe, is at least the most *unpastoral*. Nor is their *criticism* of this poem much better than their execution. A late writer [p] indeed pronounces M. de Fontenelle's discourse on pastoral poetry *to be one of the finest pieces of criticism in the world*. For my part, I can only say it is rather more tolerable than his pastorals.

[p] Mr. Hume, OF SIMPLICITY AND REFINEMENT.

248. OFFENDENTUR ENIM QUIBUS EST EQUUS ET PATER ET RES.] The poet, in his endeavour to reclaim his countrymen from the *taste obscene*, very politely, by a common figure, represents that as being the *fact*, which he wished to be so. For what reception the rankest obscenities met with on the Roman stage, we learn from Ovid's account of the success of the MIMI :

*Nobilis hos virgo matronaque, virque puerque,
Spectat : et è magnâ parte senatus adest.*

Trist. ii. 501.

This, indeed, was not till some time after the date of this epistle. But we may guess from hence what must have been the tendency of the general disposition, and may see to how little effect the poet had laboured to divert the public attention from the *Mimes* to his reformed *Atellanes*.

251. SYLLABA LONGA BREVI, &c.] This whole critique on the satires concludes with some directions about the Iambic verse. When the commentary asserts, that this metre was common to tragedy and the satyrs, this is not to be taken strictly; the satyrs, in this respect, as in every other, sustaining a sort of intermediate character betwixt tragedy and comedy. For,
accurately

accurately speaking, their proper measure, as the grammarians teach, was the Iambic, enlivened with the tribrachys. "*Gaudet*" [Victor. l. ii. c. met. Iamb.] "*trisyllabo pede et maxime tribrache.*" Yet there was likeness enough to consider this whole affair of the metre under the same head. The Roman dramatic writers were very careless in their versification, which arose, as is hinted, line 259, from an immoderate and undistinguishing veneration of their old poets.

In conclusion of all that has been delivered on the subject of these *satires*, it may be amusing to the learned reader to hear a celebrated French critic express himself in the following manner: "*Les Romains donnoient encore le nom de satire à une espece de piece pastorale; qui tenoit, dit on, le milieu entre la tragedie et la comedie. C'est tout ce que nous en sçavons.*" [*Mem. de l'Hist. des Belles Lett.* tom. xvii. p. 211.]

264. ET DATA ROMANIS VENIA EST INDIGNA POETIS.] It appears certainly, that what is said here concerning the metre of dramatic poems, was peculiarly calculated for the correction of the Roman negligence and inaccuracy in this respect. This, if it had not been so expressly told us, would have been seen from the few remaining fragments of the old Latin plays, in which a remarkable carelessness of

numbers is observed. This gives a presumption, that, with the like advantage of consulting them, it would also appear, that the rest of the poet's rules were directed to the same end, and that even such, as are delivered in the most absolute and general form, had a peculiar reference, agreeably to what is here taught of the plan of this poem, to the corresponding defects in the state of the Roman stage.

270. AT VESTRI PROAVI PLAUTINOS ET NUMEROS ET LAUDAVERE SALES; NIMIUM PATIENTER UTRUMQUE, NE DICAM STULTE, MIRATI.] It hath been thought strange, that Horace should pass so severe a censure on the wit of Plautus, which yet appeared to Cicero so admirable, that he speaks of it as *elegans, urbanum, ingeniosum, facetum*. [De Off. i. 29.] Nor can it be said, that this difference of judgment was owing to the improved delicacy of taste for wit in the Augustan age, since it doth not appear, that Horace's own jokes, when he attempts to divert us in this way, are at all better than Cicero's.

The common answer, so far as it respects the poet, is, I believe, the true one: "that endeavouring to beat down the excessive veneration
" of the elder Roman poets, and, among the rest
" (as appears from 2 Ep. i. and A. P. 54.) of
" Plautus,

“Plautus, he censures, without reserve, every
 “the least defect in his writings; though, in
 “general, he agreed with Cicero in admiring
 “him.” But then this was all. For that he
 was not so over-nice as to dislike Plautus’ wit
 in the main, and, but in this view, probably
 had not criticised him at all, I collect from his
 express approbation of the wit of the old comedy;
 which certainly was not more delicate, than
 that of *Plautus*:

ridiculum acri

Fortius et melius magnas plerumque secat res.

Illi, scripta quibus comœdia prisca viris est,

Hoc stabant, HOC SUNT IMITANDI.

1 S. x. 15.

I know, it hath been thought, that, even in this
 very place, where he censures the wit of Plautus,
 he directs us *ad Græca exemplaria*, i. e. as his
 critics understand him, to Aristophanes, and the
 other writers of the old comedy; but such a
 direction in this place were altogether improper,
 and the supposition is, besides, a palpable
 mistake. For the *Græca exemplaria* are referred
 to *only* as models in exact versification, as the
 tenor of the play fully shews. And what Ho-
 race afterwards remarks on the wit of Plautus,
 in addition to the observations on metre, is a
 new and distinct criticism, and hath no kind of
 reference to the preceding direction. But still,

as I said, Horace appears no such enemy to the old comic wit, as, without the particular reason assigned, to have so severely condemned it. The difficulty, is to account for Cicero's so peculiar admiration of it, and that a taste, otherwise so exact, as his, should delight in the coarse humour of Plautus; and the old comedy. The case, I believe, was this:

Cicero had imbibed a strong relish of the frank and libertine wit of the old comedy, as best suited to the genius of popular eloquence; which, though it demands to be tempered with some urbanity, yet never attains its end so effectually, as when let down and accommodated, in some certain degree, to the general taste and manners of the people. This Cicero in effect owns, when he tells us, the main end of jesting at the bar [De Orat. ccl.] is, not to acquire the credit of consummate humour, but to carry the cause, *ut proficiamus aliquid*: that is, *to make an impression on the people*; which is generally, we know, better done by a coarser joke, than by the elegance of refined raillery. And that this was the real ground of Cicero's preference of the old comedy to the new, may be concluded, not only from the nature of the thing, and his own example (for he was ever reckoned intemperate in his jests, which by no means answer to the elegance of his character) but is certainly collected from
what

what Quinætilian, in his account of it, expressly observes of the old comedy, *Nescio an ulla pœsis (post Homerum) aut similior sit oratoribus, aut ad oratores faciendos aptior.* The reason, doubtless, was, that *strength, and prompt and eloquent freedom, Vires et facundissima libertas*, which he had before observed, so peculiarly belonged to it.

And this, I think, will go some way towards clearing an embarrassing circumstance in the history of the Roman learning, which I know not if any writer hath yet taken notice of. It is, that though Menander and the authors of the new comedy were afterwards admired, as the only masters of the comic drama, yet this does not appear to have been seen, or, at least, so fully acknowledged, by the Roman writers, till after the Augustan age; notwithstanding that the Roman taste was, from that time, visibly declining. The reason, I doubt not, was, that the popular eloquence, which continued, in a good degree of vigour, to that time, participating more of the freedom of the *old* comic banter, and rejecting, as improper to its end, the refinements of the *new*, insensibly depraved the public taste; which, by degrees only, and not till a studied and cautious declamation had, by the necessary influence of absolute power, succeeded to the liberty of their old oratory, was fully reconciled to the delicacy and strict decorum of Menander's wit.

wit. Even the case of Terence, which, at first sight, might seem to bear hard against it, confirms this account. This poet, struck with the supreme elegance of Menander's manner, and attempting too soon, before the public taste was sufficiently formed for it, to bring it on the stage, had occasion for all the credit, his noble patrons could give him, to support himself against the popular clamour. What was the object of that *clamour*, we learn from a curious passage in one of his prologues, where his adversary is made to object,

Quas—fecit—fabulas

Tenui esse oratione et scriptura levi.

Prol. ad Phorm.

The sense of which is not, as his commentators have idly thought, *that his style was low and trifling*, for this could never be pretended, but *that his dialogue was insipid, and his characters, and, in general, his whole composition, without that comic heightening, which their vitiated tastes required*. This further appears from those common verses of Cæsar, where, characterizing the genius of Terence's plays, as devoid of this comic spirit, he calls them *lenia scripta*:

LENIBUS atque utinam SCRIPTIS adjuncta foret vis
COMICA:

words, which are the clearest comment on the lines in question.

But

But this famous judgment of Cæsar deserves to be scrutinized more narrowly. For it may be said "that by *vis comica* I suppose him to mean the comic drollery of the *old* and *middle* comedy; whereas it is more probable he meant the elegant, but high, humour of the best writers of the *new*, particularly of Menander; why else doth he call Terence, "*Dimidiate Menander?*" There is the more force in this objection, because *the elegant but high humour*, here mentioned, is of the truest merit in comedy; and because Menander, of whom the antients speak so honourably, and whom we only know by their encomiums, may be reasonably thought to have excelled in it. What occurs in answer to it, is this:

1. The antients are generally allowed to have had very little of what we now understand by *comic humour*. Lucian is the *first*, indeed the only one, who hath properly left us any considerable specimens of it. And he is almost modern with regard to the writers under consideration. But,

2. That *Menander and the writers of the new comedy did not excel in it*, is probable for these reasons.

1. The most judicious critic of antiquity, when he is purposely considering the excellencies of the Greek comedians, and, what is
more,

more, exposing the comparative deficiencies of the Roman, says not a word of it. He thinks, indeed, that *Terence's*, which yet he pronounces be to most elegant, is but the faintest shadow of the Greek, comedy. But then his reason is, *quod sermo ipse Romanus non recipere videatur illam solis concessam Atticis venerem*. [L. x. 1.] It seems then as if the main defect, which this critic observed in Terence's comedy, was a want of that inexplicable grace of language, which so peculiarly belonged to the Greeks; a grace of so subtle a nature, that even they could only catch it in one dialect—*quando eam ne Græci quidem in alio genere linguæ non obtinuerint*. [Ib.]

2. Some of Terence's plays may be almost said to be direct translations from Menander. And the comic humour, supposed in the objection, being of the truest taste, no reason can be imagined why the poet should so industriously avoid to transfuse this last and highest grace into his comedy. Especially since the popular cry against him proceeded from hence, that he was wanting in comic pleasantry; a *want*, which, by a stricter attention to this virtue of his great original, supposing Menander to have been possessed of it, he might so easily have supplied. And, lest it should be thought he omitted to do this, as not conceiving any thing of this *virtue*, or as not approving it, we find in him, but rarely indeed, some

some delicate touches, which approach as nearly as any thing in antiquity to this genuine comic humour. Of which kind is that in the *Hecyra* :

Tum tu igitur nihil adtulisti huc plus unâ sententiâ?

For these reasons, I should suppose, that *Menander*, and the writers of the new comedy, from whom Terence copied, had little of this beauty.

But what shall we say then to Cæsar's *dimidiate Menander*? It refers, I believe, solely to what Quintilian, as we have seen, observed, that, with all his emulation of Attic elegance, he was unable, through the native stubbornness of the Latin tongue, to come up to the Greek comedy. The very text of Cæsar leads to this meaning :

*Tu quoque, tu in summis, ô dimidiate Menander,
Poneris, et merito, PURI SERMONIS AMATOR.*

His excellence consisted in the *purity and urbanity of his expression*, in which praise if he still fell short of his master, the fault was not in him, but the intractability of his language. And in this view Cæsar's address carries with it the highest *compliment*. Quintilian had said in relation to this point, *Vix levem consequimur umbram*. But Cæsar, in a fond admiration of his merit, cries out,

Tu quoque, TU in summis, ô DIMIDIATE MENANDER.

I

His

His *censure* of him is delivered in the following lines :

*Lenibus atque utinam scriptis adjuncta foret vis
Comica, ut æquato virtus polleret honore
Cum Græcis, neque in hâc despectus parte jaceres ;
Unum hoc maceror et doleo tibi deesse, Terenti.*

Which, again, gives no countenance to the supposition of Menander's excelling in *comic humour*. For he does not say, that with the addition of this talent he had equalled *Menander*, but in general, the GREEKS—*æquato virtus polleret honore cum GRÆCIS*. And this was what occasioned Cæsar's regret. He wished to see him unite all the merits of the Greek comedy. As far as the Latin tongue would permit, he had shewn himself a master of the elegance of the *new*. What he further required in him was, the strong wit and satyr of the *old*. His favourite had then rivalled, in every praise, the Greek writers.

And, if this be admitted, nothing hinders but that by *vis comica* Cæsar may be understood to mean (how consistently with the admired urbanity of Terence is not the question) the comic pleasantry of the middle or old comedy.

The thing indeed could hardly be otherwise. For Plautus, who chiefly copied from the *middle* comedy, had, by the drollery of his wit, and the buffoon

buffoon pleasantries of his scenes, so enchanted the people as to continue the reigning favourite of the stage, even long after Afranius and Terence had appeared on it. Nay, the humour continued through the Augustan age [q], when, as we learn from Horace, in many parts of his writings, the public applause still followed Plautus; in whom, though himself could see many faults, yet he does not appear to have gone so far, as, upon the whole, to give the preference to Terence. Afterwards indeed the case altered. Paterculus admires; and Plutarch and Quintilian are perfectly charmed: *ita omnem vitæ imaginem expressit, ita est omnibus rebus, personis, affectibus accommodatus*. This character, one would think, should have fitted him also for a complete model to the orator. And this, as might be expected, was Quintilian's opinion. For, though he saw, as appears from the passage already quoted, that the writers of the old comedy were, in fact, *the likest to orators, and the most proper to form them to the practice of the Forum*, yet, in admiration of the absolute perfection of Menander's manner, and criticising him by the rules of a just and accurate rhetoric, and not at all in the views of a practical orator, he pro-

[q] And no wonder, when, as Suetonius tells us, the emperor himself was so delighted with the old comedy. [c. 89.]

nounces him to be a complete pattern of oratorical excellence: *vel unus, diligenter lectus, ad cuncta efficienda sufficiat*, l. x. c. i. Yet Cicero, it seems, thought otherwise; for he scarcely, as I remember, mentions the name of Menander in his rhetorical books, though he is very large in commending the authors of the old Greek comedy. The reason was unquestionably that we have been explaining. The delicate observance of decorum, for which this poet was so famous, *in omnibus mire custoditur ab hoc poeta decorum*, rendered him an unfit model for a popular speaker; especially in Rome, where an orator was much more likely to carry his point by the *vis comica*, the *broader mirth* of Aristophanes, or Plautus, than by the delicate railleries, and exquisite paintings of Menander, or Terence.

273. SI MODO EGO ET VOS SCIMUS INURBANUM LEPIDO SEPONERE DICTO.] It was very late ere the antients became acquainted with this distinction. Indeed it does not appear, they ever possessed it in that supreme degree, which might have been expected from their exquisite discernment in other instances. Even Horace himself, though his pictures of life are commonly the most delicate, and wrought up in the highest beauty of humour, yet, when he affects the *plaisant*, and purposely aims at the

the comic style and manner, is observed to sink beneath himself extremely. The truth is, there is something low, and what the French call *grossier*, in the whole cast of ancient wit; which is rather a kind of rude, illiberal satire, than a just and temperate ridicule, restrained by the exact rules of civility and good sense. This a celebrated writer, who seems willing to think the most favourably of the ancient wits, in effect owns, when, after quoting certain instances of their raillery, he says, *Ces exemples, quoique vifs et bons en leur genre, ont quelque chose de trop dur, qui ne s'accommoderoit pas à nôtre maniere de vivre; et ce seroit ce que nous appellons rompre en visiers, que de dire en face des veritez aussi forts que celles-là.* [Rec. de bons Contes et de bons Mots, p. 89.] This rudeness, complained of, appears in nothing more evident, than in their perpetual banter on corporal infirmities, which runs through all the wits both of Greece and Rome. And, to shew us that this was not a practice they allowed themselves in against rule, Cicero mentions corporal infirmities [De Or. l. ii. c. 59.] as one of the most legitimate sources of the RIDICULOUS. *Est deformitatis et corporis vitiorum satis bella materies.* And, in another place, *Valde ridentur etiam imagines, quæ fere in deformitatem, aut in aliquod vitium corporis ducuntur cum similitudine turpioris, &c.* [ib. c. 66.]

VOL. I.

Q

And

And this, which is very remarkable, though they saw the absurdity of it, as appears from the answer of Lamia, recorded by Cicero, to a joke of this kind, *Non potui mihi formam ipse fingere*, [ib. c. 65.] The universal prevalence of a practice so absurd in itself, and seen by themselves to be so, in the two politest states of the old world, must needs have sprung from some very *general*, and *powerful* cause; which, because it hath not, that I know of, been considered by any writer, I shall here attempt to open and explain. The subject is curious, and would require a volume to do it justice. •I can only hint at the principal reasons, which appear to me to have been these:

I. *The free and popular government of those states.* This, preserving an equality of condition, and thereby spreading a fearlessness and independency through all ranks and orders of men, of course produced and indulged the utmost freedom of expression, uninfluenced by hopes of favour, and unawed by fear of personal offence; the two sources, from whence the civility of a more cautious ridicule is derived. Now of all the species of raillery, the most natural and *obvious* to a people unrestrained by these causes, is ever the *coarsest*, such as that on corporal deformities; as appears from its prevailing everywhere, in all forms of government, among the lowest

lowest of the people, betwixt whom these causes never subsist. But this reason involves in it some particulars, which deserve to be considered.

1. The *orators*, who caught it from the constitution themselves, contributed in their turn to forward and help on this disposition to uncivilized mirth. For, the form of their government requiring immediate, and almost continual, applications to the people; and the nature of such applications giving frequent exercise to their wit, it was natural for them to suit it to the capacities of their auditory; if indeed they had seen better themselves. Thus we find the orators in the Forum, even in the later times of the Roman republic, exposing their adversary to the broad mirth of the populace, by enlarging on his *low stature, ugly face, or distorted chin*. Instances of which may be met with in Cicero's treatise *De oratore*; and even, as hath been observed, in some orations and other pieces of Cicero himself. 2. From the *Forum* the humour insensibly spread amongst all orders, and particularly, amongst the writers for the stage, where it was kept up in its full vigour, or rather heightened to a further extravagance, the laughter of the people being its more immediate and direct aim. But the stage not only conformed, as of course it would, to the spirit of the times (which, for the reason already given,

were none of the most observant of decorum) but, as we shall also find, it had perhaps the greatest influence in *producing and forming that spirit itself*. This will appear, if we recollect, in few words, *the rise, progress, and character of the ancient stage*.

The Greek drama, we know, had its origin from the loose, licentious raillery of the rout of Bacchus, indulging to themselves the freest sallies of taunt and invective, as would best suit to lawless natures, inspirited by festal mirth, and made extravagant by wine. Hence arose, and with a character answering to this original, the *satiric drama*; the spirit of which was afterwards, in good measure, revived and continued in the old comedy, and itself preserved, though with considerable alteration in the form, through all the several periods of the Greek stage; even when tragedy, which arose out of it, was brought to its last perfection. Much the same may be observed of the *Roman drama*, which, we are told, had its rise in the unrestrained festivity of the rustic youth. This gave occasion to their *Satyræ*, that is, medleys of an irregular form, acted for the diversion of the people. And, when afterwards Livius Andronicus had, by a further reform, reduced these *Satyræ* into regular tragedies, another species of buffoon ridicule was cultivated, under the name of *Atellana fabulæ*;

fabulæ; which, according to Diomedes' character of them, *were replete with jocular witticisms, and very much resembled the Greek satyrs. Diælis jocularibus refertæ, similes fere sunt satyricis fabulis Græcorum.* These were ever after retained, and annexed to their most regular dramatic entertainments in Rome, just as the *satyrs* were in Greece; and this (as was seen in its place) though much pains was taken to reform, if not wholly remove, them. But, to shew how strong the passion of the Romans was for this rude illiberal banter, even the licentious character of the *Atellanes* did not fully satisfy them; but, as if they were determined to stick to their genuine rusticity, they continued the *Satyræ* themselves, under the name of *Exodia*, that is, farces of the grossest and most absurd composition; which, to heighten the mirth of the day, were commonly interwoven with the *Atellane* pieces. The reason of the continuance of such ribaldry in the politest ages of Greece and Rome hath been enquired into. At present it appears, what effect it must necessarily have upon the public taste.

II. Another cause, connected with the foregoing, and rising out of it, seems to have been the festal licence of particular seasons, such as the *Dionysia* and *Panathenæa*, amongst the Greeks; and the *Bacchanalia* and *Saturnalia*, at

Rome. These latter, it is observable, were continued to the latest period of the Roman empire, preserving in them an image, as well of the frank and libertine wit of their old stage, as of the original equality and independency of their old times. Quintilian thinks, that, with some regulation, good use might have been made of these seasons of licence, for the cultivating a just spirit of raillery in the orators of his time. As it was, there is no doubt, they helped much to vitiate and deprave it. His words are these: *Quin illæ ipsæ, quæ dicta sunt ac vocantur, quas certis diebus festæ licentiæ dicere solebamus, si paulum adhibita ratione fingerentur, aut aliquid in his serium quoque esset admixtum, plurimum poterunt utilitatis asferre: quæ nunc juvenum, aut sibi ludentium exercitatio est.* [Quint. l. iv. c. 3.] Besides, in Greece, the jester was a character by profession, necessary to the pleasantry of private feasts, and, as we learn from the fine satire in Xenophon's *Symposium*, even in that polite age, welcome to all companies [r].

[r] This is further confirmed from Lucian, who, in the description of a splendid feast in his *ΔΑΕΚΤΡΥΩΝ*, and in the *Symposium of his ΔΑΠΙΘΑΙ*, brings in the *ΓΕΛΩΤΟΠΟΙΟΙ* as necessary attendants on the entertainment.—But the reader will not take what is said of the *fine satire* of Xenophon's *Symposium*, who hath not observed, that this sort of compositions,

From

From these reasons, I think it not difficult to account for the coarseness of ancient wit. The

which were in great credit with the antients, are of the nature of dramas, *ΘΗΚΟΙ ΛΟΓΟΙ*, as Aristotle would call them. In which the dialogists, who are real personages as in the *old comedy*, give a lively, and sometimes exaggerated, expression of their own characters. Under this idea of a Symposium we are prepared to expect *bad* characters as well as *good*. Nothing in the *kind* of composition itself confined the writer to the *latter*; and the decorum of a *festal conversation*, which, in a republic especially, would have a mixture of satire in it, seemed to demand the *former*. We see then the undoubted purpose of Xenophon in the persons of his JESTER and SYRACUSIAN; and of Plato, in those of ARISTOPHANES, and some others. Where we may further take notice, that, to prevent the abuse and misconstruction, to which these personated discourses are ever liable, Socrates is brought in to correct the looseness of them, in both dialogues, and, in some measure, doth the office of the dramatic chorus, *BONIS FAVENDI*. But it is the less strange, that the moderns have not apprehended the genius of these *Symposia*, when Athenæus, who professedly criticises them, and, one would think, had a better opportunity of knowing their real character, hath betrayed the grossest ignorance about them.—I can but just hint these things, which might afford curious matter for a dissertation. But enough is said to let the intelligent reader into the true secret of these *convivial dialogues*, and to explain the ground of the encomium here passed upon *one* of them.

free genius of the Greek and Roman constitution was unquestionably its main spring and support. But, when this character of their government was seconded by the freedom of their demagogues, the petulance of the stage, and the uncontrouled licence of recurring festival solemnities, it was no wonder, the illiberal manner so thoroughly infected all ranks and degrees of the people, as by no after-diligence and refinement wholly to be removed. And this theory is indeed confirmed by *fact*. For, when now the tyranny of one man had ingrossed the power, and oppressed the liberties, of Greece, their stage refined, their wit polished, and Menander wrote. And though a thorough reform was never made in the Roman stage, partly, as Quintilian thinks, from the intractability of their language, but chiefly, it may be, as to the point in question, from the long continuance of their rude farcical shews, yet something like this appears to have followed upon the loss of their freedom; as is plain from the improved delicacy of their later critics; who, as Quintilian and Plutarch, are very profuse in their encomiums on Menander, and the *new* comedy; whereas we find little said of it by the Augustan writers, who seem generally to have preferred the coarser wit and pleasantry of the *old*. The state of modern wit too confirms this account. For
it

it has grown up, for the most part, under limited monarchies, in which their scenical entertainments were more moderate, or for plain reasons must less affect the public taste. Whenever therefore a turn for letters has prevailed, a poignant, but liberal, kind of wit hath generally sprung up with it. Where it is worth observing, the growing tyranny in some states hath either extinguished it entirely, or refined it into an effeminate and timid delicacy, as the growing licentiousness in others hath sunk it into a rude and brutal coarseness; whilst, by a due mixture of liberty and letters, we have seen it acquire a proper temperament at home, and, as managed by our best writers, exhibit a specimen of that strong, yet elegant ridicule, which hath never yet been equalled by any other nation in the world.

275. *IGNOTUM TRAGICAE GENUS INVENISSE CAMENAE, &c.*] The poet, having just remarked the negligence of the Roman writers in two or three instances, and at the same time recommended to them the superior care and accuracy of the Greeks (all which is elegantly preparatory to the last division of the epistle) proceeds in a short view of the Greek drama, to insinuate, as well the successful pains of the Greek writers, as the real state of the Roman stage;

stage; the complete glory of which could only be expected, as immediately follows, from a spirit of diligence and correctness. As this whole connexion is clear and easy, so is the peculiar method, in which it is conducted, extremely proper. 1. To shew, how great the advantage of their situation was over that of the Greeks, he observes, that the latter had the whole constitution of the drama to invent and regulate; which yet, by the application and growing experience of their poets, was soon effected; their tragedy, all rude and shapeless as it was in the cart of Theſpis, appearing in its just form and proportion on the stage of Æschylus; and their comedy also (which, from that time, began to be cultivated) asserting its proper character, and, but for the culpable omission of a chorus, reaching the full extent and perfection of its kind.

2. To shew, what still remained to them, he brings down the history of tragedy no lower than Æschylus; under whom it received its due form, and all the essentials of its nature, yet still wanted, to its absolute perfection, the further accuracy and correctness of a Sophocles. And, for their comedy, he hints the principal defect of that; its omission, after the manner of the new comedy, of the chorus. There is great address in this conduct. The censure also implied

plied in it, is perfectly just. For, 1. the character of the Roman tragedy, in the times of Horace, was exactly that of Æschylus. Æschylus, says Quintilian, was the first, "*qui protulit tragædias*," i. e. who composed true legitimate tragedies, *sublimis et gravis et grandiloquus sæpe usque ad vitium; sed rudis in plerisque et incompositus*, [L. x. c. i.] the very description, which Horace gives [2 Ep. i. 165.] of the Roman tragedy:

*natura sublimis et acer,
Nam spirat tragicum satis et feliciter audet;
Sed turpem putat inscitus metuitque lituram.*

2. The state of their comedy, as managed by their best writers, Afranius and Terence, was, indeed, much more complete; yet wanted the chorus, which, in the judgment of the poet, it seems, was equally necessary to the perfection of this, as of the other drama.

3. But the application is made in express terms:

Nil intentatum nostri liquere poetæ, &c.

i. e. our poets, as well as the Greek, have, in some degree, applied themselves to improve and regulate the stage. In particular, a late innovation, in taking their subjects, both of tragedy and comedy, from domestic facts, is highly to be applauded. Their sole disadvantage is, a ne-
glect

gleet or contempt of that labour and accuracy, which gave the last perfection to the Greek scene.

After this clear and natural exposition of the connexion of these lines, all the difficulties, that have been found in them by certain great critics, vanish of themselves. And the reader now sees (what the sagacious Heinſius thought impossible to be shewn) an ἀκολουθίαν, or consistent, natural order in this part of the epistle; which was in imminent danger of losing all its grace and beauty, by the wild transpositions of that critic.

278. POST HUNC PERSONAE PALLAEQUE, &c.] M. Dacier hath here puzzled himself with a difficulty of his own raising. He wonders, that Horace should omit, in this history, the other improvements of Æschylus, mentioned by Aristotle; and that Aristotle, in his turn, should omit those, mentioned by Horace. The truth is, neither of them intended a complete account of the improvements of the Greek stage; but only so much of them, as was necessary to the views of each. Aristotle, treating of the *internal* constitution of the drama, speaks of such changes, made in it by Æschylus, as respected that end. Horace, treating in general of its *form*, as perfected by the pains and application of the same poet, selects those improvements only, which contrast best to the rude essays of Theſpis,

Thespis, and, while they imply the rest, exhibit tragedy, as it were, in her proper person, on the stage. The reader feels the effect of this in the poetry.

288. VEL QUI PRAETEXTAS, VEL QUI DO-
CUERE TOGATAS.] There hath been much
difficulty here in settling a very plain point.
The question is, whether *prætextas* means *tra-
gedy*, or a species of *comedy*? The answer is very
clear from Diomedes, whose account is, in short,
this: “¹ *Togatæ* is a general term for all sorts
“ of Latin plays, adopting the Roman customs
“ and dresses; as *Palliata* is, for all, adopting
“ the Græcian. Of the *Togatæ*, the several
“² species are, 1. *Prætexta*, or *Prætextata*, in
“ which Roman kings and generals were intro-
“ duced, and is so called, because the *prætexta*
“ was the distinguishing habit of such persons.
“ 2. *Tabernaria*, frequently called ³ *Togata*,
“ though that word, as we have seen, had pro-
“ perly a larger sense. 3. *Atellana*. 4. *Planipe-
“ dis*.” He next marks the difference of these
several sorts of *Togatæ*, from the similar, corre-
sponding ones of the *Palliata*, which are these:
“ 1. ⁴ *Tragœdia*, absolutely so stiled. 2. ⁵ *Co-
“ mœdia*. 3. ⁶ *Satyri*. 4. ⁷ *Mimos*.” [These
four sorts of the *palliata* were also probably in
use at Rome; certainly, at least, the two
former.] It appears then from hence, that
præ-

prætextata was properly the Roman tragedy. But he adds, "*Togata prætextata a tragædia differt*, and it is also said, *to be only like tragedy, 'tragædia similis.'*" What is this difference and this likeness? The explanation follows. "Heroes are introduced in *tragedy*, such as Orestes, Chryses, and the like. In the *prætextata*, Brutus, Decius, or Marcellus." So then we see, when Græcian characters were introduced, it was called simply *tragædia*; when Roman, *prætextata*; yet both, tragedies. The sole difference lay in the persons being foreign or domestic. The correspondence in every other respect was exact. The same is observed of the Roman comedy; when it adopted Greek characters, it was called *comædia*: when Roman, *Togata Tabernaria*, or *Togata*, simply. That the reader may assure himself of the fidelity of this account, let him take it at large, in the grammarian's own words: "*Togatæ fabulæ dicuntur, quæ scriptæ sunt secundum ritus et habitus hominum togatorum, id est, Romanorum (Toga namque Romana est), sicut Græcæ fabulæ ab habitu æque palliatis Varro ait nominari. Togatas autem cum sit generale nomen, specialiter tamen pro tabernariis, non modo communis error usurpat, sed et poætæ. —Togatarum fabularum species tot fere sunt, quot et palliatarum. Nam prima species est*
" toga-

" togatarum, quæ prætextatæ dicuntur, in qui-
 " bus imperatorum negotia agebantur et publica,
 " et reges Romani vel duces inducuntur, per-
 " sonarum et argumentorum sublimitate ⁴ tra-
 " gœdiis similes: Prætextatæ autem dicuntur,
 " quia fere regum vel magistratuum, qui præ-
 " texta utuntur, in hujusmodi fabulis acta com-
 " prehenduntur. Secunda species togatarum,
 " quæ tabernariæ dicuntur, humilitate per-
 " sonarum et argumentorum similitudine ⁵ co-
 " mœdiis paræ—Tertia species est fabularum
 " Latinarum, quæ—Atellanæ dictæ sunt, similes
 " ⁶ satyricis fabulis, Græcis. Quarta species
 " est planipedis, Græce dicitur ⁷ Μῦθος.—
 " Togata prætextata, a ⁴ tragœdia differt. In
 " tragœdia ⁸ heroes introducuntur. Pacuvius
 " tragœdias nominibus heroicis scripsit Oresten;
 " Creten, Chrysen, et his similia. Item Accius.
 " In prætextata autem scribitur, Brutus, vel
 " Decius, vel Marcellus. ⁹ Togata tabernaria
 " a ⁵ comœdia differt, quod in ² comœdia Græci
 " ritus inducuntur, personæque Græcæ, Laches,
 " Sotrata. In illa vero Latinæ." [L. iii. c. de
 Com. et Trag. diff.] With this account of
 Diomedes agrees perfectly that of *Festus*; from
 which, however, M. Dacier draws a very dif-
 ferent conclusion: " Togatarum duplex est
 " genus: prætextarum—et tabernariarum." His
 inference is, that prætextatæ, as being a species

of the togatæ, must needs be comedies; not considering that togata is here a generic term, comprehending under it all the several species both of the Roman tragedy and comedy. After what hath been said, and especially after the full and decisive testimony of Diomedes, there can no longer be any doubt about the meaning of *prætextas*; and one must be surprized to find M. Dacier prefacing his long note on this place in the following important manner: *C'est un des plus difficiles passages d'Horace, et peut-être celui qu'il est le plus mal aisé d'eclaircir à cause du peu de lumière que nous donnent les auteurs Latins sur tout ce qui regarde leurs pièces de théâtre.*

281. SUCCESSIT VETUS HIS COMOEDIA, &c.]
i. e. Comedy began to be cultivated and improved from the time that tragedy had obtained its end, ἔρχε τὴν ἰαυλῆς φύσιν, under Æschylus. There is no reason to suppose, with some critics, that Horace meant to date its origin from hence. The supposition is, in truth, contradicted by *experience* and the *order of things*. For, as a celebrated French writer observes, “ *Le talent d'imiter, qui nous est naturel, nous porte plutôt à la comédie qui roule sur des choses de notre connoissance qu'à la tragédie, qui prend des sujets plus éloignés de l'usage commun; et en effet, en Grèce aussi bien qu'en France, la comédie est l'aînée* de

de la tragedie." [Hist. du Theat. Franc. par M. de Fontenelle.] The *latter* part of this assertion is clear from the piece referred to; and the *other*, which respects Greece, seems countenanced by Aristotle himself [*περ. ποιητ. κ. ε.*] It is true, comedy, though its rise be every where, at least, as early as that of tragedy, is perfected much later. Menander, we know, appeared long after Æschylus. And, though the French tragedy, to speak with Aristotle, *ἔργε τῆς ἐκείνης φύσεως* in the hands of Corneille, this cannot be said of their comedy, which was forced to wait for a Moliere, before it arrived at that pitch of perfection. But then this is owing to the superior difficulty of the comic drama. Nor is it any objection that the contrary of this happened at Rome. For the Romans, when they applied themselves in earnest to the stage, had not to invent, but to imitate, or rather *translate*, the perfect models of Greece. And it chanced, for reasons which I shall not stay to deduce, that their poets had better success in copying their *comedy*, than *tragedy*.

284. TURBITER OBTRICUIT—] Evidently because, though the *jus nocendi* was taken away, yet that was no good reason why the chorus should entirely cease. M. Dacier mistakes the matter. *Le chœur se tût ignominieusement, parce-*
 VOL. I. R *que*

que la loi reprima sa licence, et que ce fut, à proprement parler, la loi qui le bannit; ce qu'Horace regarde comme une espece de flétrissure. Properly speaking, the law only abolished the abuse of the chorus. The ignominy lay in dropping the entire use of it, on account of this restraint. Horace was of opinion, that the chorus ought to have been retained, though the state had abridged it of the licence, it so much delighted in, of an illimited, and intemperate satire. Sublatus chorus fuit, says Scaliger, cujus illæ videntur esse præcipuæ partes, ut potissimum quos liberet, læderent.

286. NEC MINIMUM MERUERE DECUS VESTIGIA GRÆCA AUSI DESERERE ET CELEBRARE DOMESTICA FACTA.] This judgment of the poet, recommending domestic subjects, as fittest for the stage, may be enforced from many obvious reasons. As, 1. that it renders the drama infinitely more *affecting*: and this on many accounts. 1. As a subject, taken from our own annals, must of course carry with it an air of greater probability, at least to the generality of the people, than one borrowed from those of any other nation. 2. As we all find a personal interest in the subject. 3. As it of course affords the best and easiest opportunities of catching our minds, by frequent references to our manners, prejudices, and customs. And of how great

great importance this is, may be learned from hence, that, even in the exhibition of foreign characters, dramatic writers have found themselves obliged to sacrifice truth and probability to the humour of the people, and to dress up their personages, contrary to their own better judgment, in some degree according to the mode and manners of their respective countries [s]. And, 4. as the writer himself, from an intimate acquaintance with the character and genius of his own nation, will be more likely to draw the manners with life and spirit.

II. Next, which should ever be one great point in view, it renders the drama more gene-

[s] "L'étude égale des poëtes de différens tems à
 "plaire à leurs spectateurs, a encore influé dans la
 "maniere de peindre les caracteres. Ceux qui paroif-
 "sent sur la scene Angloise, Espagnols, François,
 "sont plus Anglois, Espagnols, ou François que
 "Grecs ou Romains, en un mot que ce qu'ils doivent
 "être. Il ne faut qu'en peu discernement pour
 "s'appercevoir que nos Césars et nos Achilles, en
 "gardant même une partie de leur caractere primitif,
 "prennent droit de naturalité dans le pais où ils sont
 "transplantez, semblables à ces portraits, qui sortent
 "de la main d'un peintre Flamand, Italien, ou
 "François, et qui portent l'empreinte du pais. On
 "veut plaire à sa nation, et rien ne plaît tant que la
 "ressemblance de manieres et de genie." [P. Brumoy,
 vol. i. p. 200.]

rally useful in its moral destination. For, it being conversant about domestic acts, the great instruction of the fable more sensibly affects us; and the characters exhibited, from the part we take in their good or ill qualities, will more probably influence our conduct.

III. Lastly, this judgment will deserve the greater regard, as the conduct recommended was, in fact, the practice of our great models, the Greek writers; in whose plays, it is observable, there is scarcely a single scene, which lies out of the confines of Greece.

But, notwithstanding these reasons, the practice hath, in all times, been but little followed. The Romans, after some few attempts in this way (from whence the poet took the occasion of delivering it as a dramatic precept), soon relapsed into their old use; as appears from Seneca's, and the titles of other plays, written in, or after the Augustan age. Succeeding times continued the same attachment to Grecian, with the addition of an equal fondness for Roman, subjects. The reason in both instances hath been ever the same: that strong and early prejudice, approaching somewhat to adoration, in favour of the illustrious names of those two great states. The account of this matter is very easy; for their writings, as they furnish the business of our younger, and the amusement of
our

our riper, years; and more especially make the study of all those, who devote themselves to poetry and the stage, insensibly infix in us an excessive veneration for all affairs in which they were concerned; insomuch, that no other subjects or events seem considerable enough, or rise, in any proportion, to our ideas of the dignity of the tragic scene, but such as time and long admiration have consecrated in the annals of their story. Our Shakespeare was, I think, the first that broke through this bondage of classical superstition. And he owed this felicity, as he did some others, to his want of what is called the advantage of a learned education. Thus uninfluenced by the weight of early prepossession, he struck at once into the road of nature and common sense: and without designing, without knowing it, hath left us in his historical plays, with all their anomalies, an exacter resemblance of the Athenian stage, than is any where to be found in its most professed admirers and copyists.

I will only add, that, for the more successful execution of this rule of celebrating domestic acts, much will depend on the era, from whence the subject is taken. Times too remote have almost the same inconveniences, and none of the advantages, which attend the ages of Greece and Rome. And for those of later date, they

are too much familiarized to us, and have not as yet acquired that venerable cast and air, which tragedy demands, and age only can give. There is no fixing this point with precision. In the general, that æra is the fittest for the poet's purpose, which, though fresh enough in our minds to warm and interest us in the event of the action, is yet at so great a distance from the present times, as to have lost all those mean and disparaging circumstances, which unavoidably adhere to recent deeds, and, in some measure, sink the noblest modern transactions to the level of ordinary life.

295. INGENIUM MISERA, &c.] *Sæpe audiui poetam bonum neminem (id quod a Democrito et Platone in scriptis relictum esse dicunt) sine inflammatione animorum existere posse et sine quodam afflatu quasi furoris.* [Cic. de Orat. l. ii. c. 46.] And so Petronius, *præcipitandus liber spiritus, ut furentis animi vaticinatio appareat.* [c. 118.] And to the same purpose every good critic, ancient or modern. But who can endure the grimace of those minute *genii*, who, because they truly inspired, in the ravings of the fit, are touched with the flame and fury of enthusiasm, must, therefore, with a tame, frigid fancy, be laying claim to the same fervent and fiery raptures? The fate of these *aspirants* to divinity is that

that ἐνθροισιᾶν ἰαυλοῖς δοκῶντες, ἔ βακχεύουσιν, ἀλλὰ
 παύσονται. [Longin. περ. ὕψ. τμήμ. χ.] And
 Quintilian opens the mystery of the whole
 matter: *Quo quisque ingenio minus valet, hoc se
 magis attollere et dilatare conatur: ut statura breves
 in digitos eriguntur et plura infirmi minantur.
 Nam tumidos et corruptos et tinnulos et quocunque
 alio cacozeliæ genere peccantes, certum habeo, non
 virium, sed infirmitatis vitio laborare: ut corpora
 non robore, sed valetudine inflantur: et recto itinere
 lapsi plerumque divertunt.* [L. ii. c. 3.]

298. BONA PARS NON UNGUES, &c.] The
 constant and pitiful affectation of the race be-
 fore spoken of, who, with the modesty of laying
 claim to the *thing*, will be sure not to omit the
sign, and so, from fancying an inspiration, they
 have *not* come to adopt every foppery, that has
 ever disgraced it in those who *have*,

308. QUID DECEAT, QUID NON.] *Nihil est
 difficilius quam, quid deceat, videre. Πρέπον
 appellant hoc Græci: nos dicamus sane decorum.
 De quo præclare et multa præcipiuntur, et res est
 cognitione dignissima. Hujus ignoratione non modo
 in vitâ, sed sæpissime in POEMATIS & in oratione
 peccatur.* [Orator. xxi.]

309. SCRIBENDI RECTE, SAPERE EST ET PRINCIPIMUM ET FONS.] The orator was of the same mind, when he sent his pupil to the academy for instruction. *Quis nescit maximam vim existere oratoris in hominum mentibus, vel ad iram, aut dolorem incitandis, vel ab hisce iisdem permotionibus ad lenitatem misericordiamque revocandis? quæ, nisi qui naturas hominum, vinque omnem humanitatis, causasque eas quibus mentes aut incitantur aut reflectuntur, penitus perspexerit, dicendo, quod volet, perficere non poterit. Atqui TOTUS HIC LOCUS PHILOSOPHORUM PROPRIUS VIDETUR.* [De Orat. l. i. c. 12.] And he spoke, we know, from his own experience, having acquired his oratorial skill not in the schools of the rhetoricians, but the walks of the academy: *fateor me oratorem, si modo sim, aut etiam quicumque sim, non ex rhetorum officiniis, sed ex academiciæ spatiis extitisse.* [Orat. p. 622. Elz. ed.] But the reason he gives for this advice, though common to the poet; whose character, as well as the orator's, it is, *posse voluntates impellere, quo velis, unde velis, deducere*, is yet, not the only one, which respects the poet. For his business is to paint, and that not only, as the orator does, in order to move, but for the sole end of *pleasing*: *solam petit voluptatem.* [Quinct. l. x. c. 1.] The boast of his art is, to catch every different aspect of

of nature, and more especially to exhibit the human character in every varying light and form, under which it presents itself. But this is not to be done without an exquisite study, and philosophical knowledge of man; to which end, as is remarked, in *n.* on line 317, the Socratic philosophy is more peculiarly adapted. Add to this, that it is the genius of true poetry, not only to animate, but to *personalize* every thing, *omnia debent esse morata*. Hence the indispensable necessity of moral science: all poetry being, in effect, what Mr. Dryden somewhere calls comedy, THE THEFT OF POETS FROM MANKIND.

310. SOCRATICAE CHARTAE.] An admired writer, in many respects deservedly so, thus comments on these words: "The philosophical writings, to which our poet refers, were in themselves a kind of poetry, like the *mimes*, or personated pieces of early times, before philosophy was in vogue, and when as yet *dramatical imitation* was scarce formed: or at least, in many parts, not brought to due perfection. They were pieces, which, besides their force of style, and hidden numbers, carried a sort of *action* and *imitation*, the same as the *epic* and *dramatic* kinds. They were either real dialogues, or recitals of such personated

“sonated discourses; where the persons them-
 “selves had their characters preserved through-
 “out; their manners, humours, and distinct
 “turns of temper and understanding maintained,
 “according to the most exact poetical truth. It
 “was not enough, that these pieces treated fun-
 “damentally of morals, and, in consequence,
 “pointed out real characters and manners:
 “They exhibited them alive, and set the coun-
 “tenances and complexions of men plainly in
 “view. And by this means they not only
 “taught us to know others; but, what was
 “principal, and of highest virtue in them, they
 “taught us to know ourselves.” Thus far
 then these models are of unquestioned use to
 writers of every denomination. I forbear to
 mention, what this noble author finds occasion
 frequently to insinuate, and, by his own prac-
 tice, labours to recommend, the superior excel-
 lency of the *manner*, as well as *matter*, of these
 highly-rated originals. Not that I presume to
 think it unworthy of imitation. But the public
 taste, as appears, is running full fast that way,
 inasmuch, that some may even doubt, if the state
 of literary composition be more endangered by
 the neglect, or vicious imitation, of the Platonic
 manner. Its graces, when sparingly employed
 by a real genius, for the embellishment of strong
 sense, have, it must be owned, great beauty.

But

But when this humour of *platonizing* seizes on some minuter spirit, bent on ennobling a trivial matter, and all over-run with academic delicacy and affectation, nothing, to a just and manly relish, can be more disgusting. One must wink hard, not to see frequent examples of this, in the master Platonist himself. But his mimics, of late, have gone much farther. There is no need, in such a croud of instances, to point to particulars. What I would rather observe is, that this folly, offensive as it is, may perhaps admit of some excuse from the *present state of our literature*, and *the character of the great original himself*, whom these writers aspire to imitate. When a language, as ours at this time, hath been much polished, and enriched with perfect models of style in almost every way, it is in the order of things, that the next step should be to a *vicious affectation*. For the simplicity of true taste, under these circumstances, grows insipid. Something *better than the best* must be aimed at; and the reader's languid appetite raised by the provocatives of an ambitious refinement. And this in *sentiment*, as well as *language*. Whence we see how it happened, that, even in *Greece* itself, where composition was studied with a more than common accuracy, *philosophy*, when it passed out of the hands of its great masters, degenerated by degrees into the subtilties of sophistry,

phistry, as did eloquence, likewise, into the tricks of rhetoric.

But there was something, as I hinted, too, in the character of the writer imitated, of a very ticklish and dangerous nature; and of which our tribe of imitators were not sufficiently aware. A very exact critic of antiquity hath told us what it was. It lay in Plato's bringing the tumor of poetic composition into discourses of philosophy, ΟΤΙ ΤΟΝ ΟΙΚΟΝ ΤΗΣ ΠΟΙΗΤΙΚΗΣ ΚΑΤΑΣΚΕΥΗΣ ΕΠΙ ΛΟΓΟΥΣ ΗΓΑΓΕ ΦΙΛΟΣΟΦΟΥΣ [1]. And though the experiment, for the most part, succeeded not amiss (as what contradiction is there which superior genius cannot reconcile?) yet it sometimes failed even in his hands. And as a French writer well expresses it, *LE DIVIN Plato, pour avoir voulu s'élever trop au dessus des hommes, est souvent tombé dans un GALIMATIAS pompeux que quelques-uns confondent avec le SUBLIME.* The PHAEDRUS, though the most remarkable, is not the only example of such mischance in the writings of this great man.

317. *VERA'S HINC DUCERE VOCES.*] *Truth*, in poetry, means such an expression, as conforms to the general nature of things; *falsehood*, that, which, however suitable to the particular instance

[1] DIONYS. HALICARN. EP. AD C. POMP. p. 205. *Edit. Hudf.*

in view, doth yet not correspond to such *general nature*. To attain to this *truth* of expression in dramatic poetry, two things are prescribed: 1. A diligent study of the Socratic philosophy; and, 2. A masterly knowledge and comprehension of human life. The *first*, because it is the peculiar distinction of this school, *ad veritatem vitæ propius accedere*. [Cic. de Or. i. 51.] And the *latter*, as rendering the imitation more universally striking. This will be understood by reflecting that *truth* may be followed too closely in works of imitation, as is evident in two respects. For, 1. the artist, when he would give a copy of nature, may confine himself too scrupulously to the exhibition of *particulars*, and so fail of representing the general idea of the *kind*. Or, 2. in applying himself to give the *general* idea, he may collect it from an enlarged view of *real* life, whereas it were still better taken from the nobler conception of it as subsisting only in the *mind*. This last is the kind of censure we pass upon the *Flemish* school of painting, which takes its model from real nature, and not, as the *Italian*, from the contemplative idea of beauty [u]. The

[u] In conformity with the *antique*. *Nec enim Phidias, cum faceret Jovis formam aut Minervæ, contemplabatur aliquem e quo similitudinem duceret: sed ipse in mente incidebat species pulchritudinis eximia quædam, quam intuens in eaque defixus ad illius similitudinem artem et manum dirigebat.* [Cic. Orat. 2.]

former

former corresponds to that other fault objected also to the Flemish masters, which consists in their copying from particular odd and grotesque nature in contradistinction to general and graceful nature.

We see then that, in deviating from particular and partial, the poet more faithfully imitates *universal*, truth. And thus an answer occurs to that refined argument, which Plato invented and urged, with much seeming complacency, against poetry. It is, that *poetical imitation is at a great distance from truth*. "Poetical expression, says the philosopher, is the copy of the poet's own conceptions; the poet's conception, of things; and things, of the standing archetype, as existing in the divine mind. Thus the poet's expression is a copy at third hand, from the primary, original truth." [Plat. de Rep. l. x.] Now the diligent study of this rule of the poet obviates this reasoning at once. For, by abstracting from existences all that peculiarly respects and discriminates the *individual*, the poet's conception, as it were neglecting the intermediate particular objects, catches, as far as may be, and reflects the divine archetypal idea, and so becomes itself the copy or image of truth. Hence too we are taught the force of that unusual encomium on poetry by the great critic, *that it is something more severe and*
philo-

philosophical than history, φιλοσοφώτερον ἢ σπουδαιότερον ποιήσις ἱστορίας ἐστίν. The reason follows, which is now very intelligible; ἡ μὲν γὰρ ποιήσις μᾶλλον τὰ καθόλου, ἡ δ' ἱστορία τὰ καθ' ἕκαστον λέγει. [περ. ποιητ. κ. θ'.] And this will further explain an essential difference, as we are told, between the two great rivals of the Greek stage. Sophocles, in return to such as objected a want of truth in his characters, used to plead, *that he drew men such as they ought to be, Euripides such as they were*. Σοφοκλῆς ἔφη, αὐτὸς μὲν οἷος δὲ ποιῶν, Εὐριπίδης δὲ οἷοί εἰσι. [Περ. ποιητ. κ. κί.] The meaning of which is, Sophocles, from his more extended commerce with mankind, had enlarged and widened the narrow, partial conception, arising from the contemplation of *particular* characters, into a complete comprehension of the *kind*. Whereas the philosophic Euripides, having been mostly conversant in the academy, when he came to look into life, keeping his eye too intent on single, really existing personages, sunk the *kind* in the *individual*; and so painted his characters naturally indeed, and *truly*, with regard to the objects in view, but sometimes without that general and universally striking likeness, which is demanded to the full exhibition of poetical truth.

But

But here an objection meets us, which must not be overlooked. It will be said, "that philosophic speculations are more likely, to render men's views *abstract* and *general*, than to confine them to *individuals*. This latter is a fault arising from the *small number* of objects men happen to contemplate: and may be removed, not only by taking a view of many *particulars*, which is knowledge of the world; but also by reflecting on the *general nature* of men, as it appears in good books of morality. For the writers of such books form their *general* notion of human nature from an extensive experience (either their own, or that of others) without which their writings are of no value." The answer, I think, is this. *By reflecting on the general nature of man*, the philosopher learns, what is the tenor of action arising from the predominancy of certain qualities or properties: *i. e.* in general, what that conduct is, which the imputed character requires. But to perceive clearly and certainly, how far, and with what degree of strength, this or that character will, on particular occasions, most probably shew itself, this is the fruit only of a knowledge of the world. Instances of a want of this knowledge cannot be supposed frequent in such a writer as Euripides; nor, when they occur, so glaring as to strike a common reader. They are niceties, which can only

only be discerned by the true critic; and even to *him*, at this distance of time, from an ignorance of the Greek manners, that may possibly appear a fault, which is a real beauty. It would therefore be dangerous to think of pointing out the places, which Aristotle might believe liable to this censure in Euripides. I will however presume to mention one, which, if not justly criticized, will, at least, serve to illustrate my meaning.

The story of his *Electra* is well known. The poet had to paint, in the character of this princess, a virtuous, but fierce, resentful woman; stung by a sense of personal ill treatment; and instigated to the revenge of a father's death, by still stronger motives. A disposition of this warm temperament, it might be concluded by the philosopher in his closet, would be prompt to shew itself. *Electra* would, on any proper occasion, be ready to avow her resentment, as well as to forward the execution of her purpose. But to what lengths would this *resentment* go? i. e. what degree of fierceness might *Electra* express, without affording occasion to a person widely skilled in mankind, and the operation of the passions, to say, "this is improbable?" Here abstract theories will be of little service. Even a moderate acquaintance with real life will be unable to direct us. Many individuals

may have fallen under observation, that will justify the poet in carrying the expression of such a *resentment* to any extreme. History would, perhaps, furnish examples, in which a virtuous resentment hath been carried even farther than is here represented by the poet. What way then of determining the precise bounds and limits of it? Only by observing in numerous instances, *i. e.* from a large extensive knowledge of practical life, how far it usually, in such characters, and under such circumstances, prevails. Hence a difference of representation will arise in proportion to the extent of that *knowledge*. Let us now see, how the character before us hath, in fact, been managed by Euripides.

In that fine scene, which passes between Electra and Orestes, whom as yet she suspects not to be her brother, the conversation very naturally turns upon Electra's distresses, and the author of them, Clytæmnestra, as well as on her hopes of deliverance from them by the means of Orestes. The dialogue upon this proceeds :

Or. What then of Orestes, were he to return to this Argos ?

El. Ah ! wherefore that question, when there is no prospect of his return at all ?

Or. But supposing he should return, how would he go about to revenge the death of his father ?

El.

El. In the same way, in which that father suffered from the daring attempts of his enemies.

Or. And could you then dare to undertake with him the murder of your mother?

El. Yes, with that very steel, with which she murdered my father.

Or. And I am at liberty to relate this to your brother, as your fixed resolution?

El. I desire only to live, till I have murdered my mother.

The Greek is still stronger :

May I die, as soon as I have murdered my mother !

Now that this last sentence is absolutely unnatural, will not be pretended. There have been doubtless many examples, under the like circumstances, of an expression of revenge carried thus far. Yet, I think, we can hardly help being a little shocked at the fierceness of *this* expression. At least *Sophocles* has not thought fit to carry it to that extreme. In him, *Electra* contents herself with saying to *Orestes*, on a similar occasion :

“The conduct of this affair now rests upon you. Only let me observe this to you, that, had I been left alone, I would not have failed in one of these two purposes, either to deliver myself gloriously, or to perish gloriously.”

Whether this representation of *Sophocles* be not more agreeable to *truth*, as collected from

wide observation, i. e. from human nature at large, than that of Euripides, the capable reader will judge. If it be, the reason I suppose to have been, that *Sophocles painted his characters, such, as, from attending to numerous instances of the same kind, he would conclude they ought to be; Euripides, such, as a narrower sphere of observation had persuaded him they were.*

319. INTERDUM SPECIOSA LOCIS, &c.] The poet's science in *ethics* will principally shew itself in these two ways, 1. in furnishing proper matter for general reflexion on human life and conduct; and, 2. in a due adjustment of the manners. By the former of these two applications of moral knowledge a play becomes, what the poet calls, *speciosa locis*, i. e. (for the term is borrowed from the rhetoricians) *striking in its moral topics*: a merit of the highest importance on the ancient stage, and which, if prudently employed in subserviency to the *latter* more essential requisite of the drama, *a just expression of the manners*, will deserve to be so reputed at all times, and on every theatre. The danger is, lest a studied, declamatory *moral*, affectedly introduced, or indulged to excess, should prejudice the natural exhibition of the *characters*, and so convert *the image of human life* into an *unaffecting*, philosophical dialogue.

319. MORATAQUE RECTE FABULA, &c.] This judgment of the poet, in regard of the superior efficacy of *manners*, is generally thought to be contradicted by Aristotle; who, in treating this subject, observes, “that let a piece be “never so perfect in the *manners*, *sentiments*, “and *style*, it will not so well answer the end “and purpose of tragedy, as if defective in “these, and finished only in the fable and “composition.” Ἐάν τις ἐφεξῆς θῇ ῥήσεις ἠθικὰς καὶ λέξεις καὶ διανοίας εὖ πεποιημένας, εἰ ποιήσῃ δὲ ἢ τῆς τραγωδίας ἔργον, ἀλλὰ πολὺ μᾶλλον ἢ καλαδέ-εσέροις τῆτοις κεχηρμένη τραγωδία, ἔχουσα δὲ μῦθον καὶ σύσασιν πραγμάτων. Κεφ. 5. M. Dacier thinks to clear this matter by saying, “that “what Aristotle remarks holds true of tragedy, “but not of comedy, of which alone Horace is “here speaking.” But granting that the artificial contexture of the fable is less necessary to the perfection of comedy than of tragedy (as it certainly is), yet the tenor of this whole division, exhorting to correctness in general, makes it unquestionable, that Horace must intend to include *both*. The case, as it seems to me, is this. The poet is not comparing the respective importance of the *fable* and *manners*, but of the *manners* and *distion*, under this word including also *numbers*. He gives them the preference,

not to a good plot, nor even to *fine sentiments*, but to *versus inopes rerum nugæque canoræ*. The art he speaks of, is the art of *expressing* the thoughts properly, gracefully, and harmoniously: the *pondus* is the force and energy of good *versification*. *Venus* is a general term including both kinds of beauty. *Fabula* does not mean the *fable* (in distinction from the rest) but simply a *play*.

323. GRAVIS INGENIUM, &c.] The Greeks being eminent for *philosophy*, especially *morals*; the last observation naturally gives rise to this. For the transition is easy from their superiority, as philosophers, to their superiority as poets; and the more easy, as the latter is shewn to be, in part, the effect of the former. Now this superiority of the Greeks in genius and eloquence (which would immediately occur, on mentioning the *Socraticæ chartæ*) being seen and confessed, we are led to ask, "whence this arises." The answer is, from their making *glory*, not *gain*, the object of their wishes.

330. AERUGO ET CURA PECULI CUM SEMEL IMBUERIT, &c.] This *love of gain*, to which Horace imputes the imperfect state of the Roman poetry, hath been uniformly assigned, by the wisdom of ancient times, as the specific bane of
of

of arts and letters. *Longinus* and *Quintilian* account, from hence, for the decay of eloquence, *Galen* of physic, *Petronius* of painting, and *Pliny* of the whole circle of the liberal arts. An ingenious modern is indeed for carrying his views much farther. He, it seems, would account [*Refl. sur la Poés. et sur la Peint.* vol. ii. § xiv.] for this *public degeneracy* of taste and literature, not from the malignity of the selfish passions, but the baleful influences of the air; emulating, I suppose, herein, the wisdom of that philosophy, which teaches to lay the *private degeneracy* of individuals on the stars. Thus much however may be true, that other causes have generally co-operated with it. Some of these, as might be shewn, did not escape the attention of these wise antients. Yet they did right to insist chiefly on *this*, which is every way equal to the effect ascribed to it. It is so in its nature: For being, as *Longinus* calls it, *νόσημα μικροπικρὸν*, a disease which narrows and contracts the soul, it must, of course, restrain the generous efforts and expansions of genius; cramp the free powers and energies of the mind, and render it unapt to open itself to wide views, and to the projection of great, extensive designs. It is so in its consequences. For, as one says elegantly, *when the passion of avarice grows general in a country, the temples of Honour are soon pulled down, and*

all men's sacrifices are made to Fortune [w]. Thus extinguishing the sense of honour, that divinest movement in our frame, and the only one, which can invigorate the mind under the long labours of invention, it must needs be, that the fire and high spirit of genius go out with it; and, dragging in its train the *love of pleasure*, that unmanliest of all the passions, it diffuses such a languor and impotency over the mind, as must leave it at length a prey to a supine wasting indolence; till, as Longinus observes of his own age (and let every friend to letters deprecate the omen), Πάῃς ἐγκαταβίσμεν, δὲ ἄλλως πονῶντες, ἢ ἀναλαμβάνοντες, εἰ μὴ ἐπαίνε καὶ ἡδονῆς ἕνεκα, ἀλλὰ μὴ τῆς ζήλ᾽ καὶ τιμῆς αἰτίας ποτὲ ὠφελείας.

333. AUT PRODESSE VOLUNT, AUT DELECTARE POETAE, &c.] Though these lines have the appearance of general criticism, yet do they more especially respect the dramatic poesy. This will be evident from attending to the context. The full boast and glory of the drama is to *delight* and *instruct* mankind. 1. The latter praise was more especially due to the ancient tragic muse, who did not think it sufficient to paint lovely pourtraitures of *public* and *social* virtue, and to call in the moralizing chorus to her

[w] Sir William Temple.

assistance,

assistance, but, which was one of her discriminating characters, she was perpetually inculcating every branch of true moral in those brief sententious precepts, which inform and solemnize her page. To these precepts then the poet manifestly refers in those lines,

*Quicquid præcipies, esto brevis: ut cito dicta
Percipiant animi dociles, teneantque fideles.*

But what follows is still clearer, [2.] The other end of the drama is to *entertain*, and this by the means of *probable fiction*.

Ficta, voluptatis causa, sint proxima veris.

And the poet applies this to the case of the drama in express words:

*Ne quodcunque volet, poscat sibi fabula credi:
Neu pransæ Lamiaë vivum puerum extrahat alva.*

The instance of *Lamia*, as Mr. Dacier observes, is certainly taken from some poet of that time, who had been guilty of this misconduct. The reader may learn from hence, how intently Horace pursues his design of criticizing the *Roman stage*, when, in treating a subject, from its nature, the most general of any in the epistle, viz. *critical correctness*, we yet find him so industriously recurring to this point.

343. MISCUIT UTILE DULCI.] The unnatural separation of the DULCE ET UTILE hath done almost as much hurt in *letters* as that of the HONESTUM ET UTILE, which Tully somewhere complains of, hath done in *morals*. For while the polite writer, as he is called, contents himself with the *former* of these qualities, and the man of erudition with the *latter*, it comes to pass, as the same writer expresses it, that ET DOCTIS ELOQUENTIA POPULARIS, ET DISERTIS ELEGANS DOCTRINA DESIT. [Orat. iii.]

363. HAEC AMAT OBSCURUM, VOLET HAEC SUB LUCE VIDERI.] Cicero hath given the same precept in relation to oratory, *habeat illa in dicendo admiratio ac summa laus umbram aliquam et recessum, quo magis id, quod erit illuminatum, extare atque eminere videatur*. [De Orat. l. iii. c. 26.]

373. MEDIOCRIBUS ESSE POETIS NON HOMINES, &c.] This judgment, however severe it may seem, is according to the practice of the best critics. We have a remarkable instance in the case of *Apollonius Rhodius*, who, though, in the judgment of *Quintilian*, the author of a no contemptible poem, yet, on account of that equal mediocrity, which every where prevails in him,

him, was struck out of the list of good writers by such sovereign judges of poetical merit, as Aristophanes and Aristarchus. [Quint. l. x. c. 1.]

403. DICTAE PER CARMINA SORTES.] The oracles here spoken of, are such as respect not *private persons* (whom a natural curiosity, quickened by anxious superstition, has ever prompted to pry into their future fortunes) but *entire communities*; and for these there was little place, till ambition had inspired great and eventful designs, and, by involving the fate of nations, had rendered the knowledge of futurity *important*. Hence, in marking the progress of ancient poetry, Horace judiciously postpones *oracles*, to the *celebration* of martial *prowess*, as being that, which gave the principal *eclat* to them. This species of poetry then is rightly placed, though it be true, as the commentators have objected, that oracles were much ancients than Homer, and the Trojan war.

404. ET VITAE MONSTRATA VIA EST;] Meaning the writings of *Theognis*, *Phocylides*, *Hesiod*, and others, which, consisting wholly of moral precepts, are elegantly said to lay open, or discover, *the road of life*. Mr. Dacier's interpretation, which makes the poet mean *physics* by *piam vitam*, is supported by no reason. *Il ne faut pas,*

pas, says he, *entendre ceci de la philosophie et des mœurs; CAR Horace se contrediroit, puisque il a dit que ce fut le premier soin de la poésie.* The learned critic did not consider, that the first care of poetry, as explained above, and as employed by Orpheus and Amphion, was to inculcate policy, not moral.

404. ET GRATIA REGUM, PIERIIS TENTATA MODIS, LUDUSQUE REPERTUS ET LONGORUM OPERUM FINIS: NE FORTE PUDORI SIT TIBI MUSA LYRAE SOLERS, ET CANTOR APOLLO.]

This is one of those master-strokes, which make the sovereign charm of this poet. But the way in which it hath been understood, extinguishes all its grace and beauty. *On les vers employa,* says an interpreter, who speaks the sense of the rest, *à gagner la faveur des rois, et on les mit de tous les jeux et de tous les spectacles, qu'on inventa pour se delasser de ses longs travaux et de toutes ses fatigues. Je vous dis cela afin que vous n'ayez point de honte de faire la cour aux Muses et à Apollon.* And, lest this should not seem explicit enough, he adds in a couple of notes, that by *ludus repertus*, &c. *il [le poete] veut parler des tragedies et des comedies que l'on faisoit jour dans les fêtes solennelles.* And then, as to the *ne forte pudori*, *Cela prouve qu' Horace ne fait cet éloge de la poésie que pour empêcher que Pison n'en fût dégoûté.* Can any

any thing be more insipid? For could the poet think so meanly of his art, as to believe it wanted an apology? Or had the *courtier* so little address, as to direct that apology immediately to the Pisos? Besides, what species of poesy is it, that he labours to excuse? Why, according to this interpretation, the *dramatic*: the supreme boast of his art, and the main subject of the epistle. And in what *manner* does he excuse it? Why, in recommending it, as an agreeable amusement. But his master, Aristotle, would have furnished him with a nobler plea: and it is certain, the antients talked at another rate of the use and end of the drama. Let us see then, if the sense, given in the commentary, will bring any relief to the poet. In fact, this whole passage [from *et vitæ*, &c. to *cantor Apollo*] obliquely glances at the two sorts of poetry, peculiarly cultivated by himself, and is an indirect apology for his own choice of them. For, 1. *vitæ monstrata via est* is the character of his *Sermones*. And, 2. all the rest of his *Odes*. These are recommended, agreeably to their nature, 1. as of use to *conciliate the favour of princes*; hereby glancing at the success of his own odes, and, with the happiest address, insinuating the regard, which Augustus paid to letters. 2. As contributing to the mirth and entertainment of feasts, and especially as holding

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ing a principal place in the celebration of those more sacred, secular festivities (*longorum operum finem*) which could not be duly solemnized, without the ministration of the lyric muse.

Castis cum pueris ignara puella mariti;

Disceret unde preces, vatem ni musa dedisset?

2 Ep. i. 132.

And again:

ego Diis amicum,

Sæculo festas referente luces,

Reddidi carmen docilis madorum

Vatis Horati.

Carm. Sec.

In another place both ends are expressed:

Tuque testudo —

Divitum MENSIS et amica TEMPLIS. 3 Od. xi.

Where it may be observed, this double character of lyric poetry exactly corresponds to that, which the poet had before expressly given of it in this very epistle: the *gratia regum* being the same as

Musa dedit fidibus Divos, puerosque Deorum,

Et pugilem victorem, et equum certamine primum.

ver. 83.

And *ludusque repertus*, describing its other office,

Et juvenum curas et libera vina referre. ib.

In this view the following line, which apologizes, not for poetry in general, or its noblest species,

species, the drama, but for his own lyrics only, hath, as the reader perceives, infinite grace; and is peculiarly marked with that vein of exquisite humour, so suited to the genius of the epistle, and which makes one of the distinguishing beauties of the poet. It hath also an extreme *propriety*; the levity of the ode admitting, or rather requiring, some apology to the Pisos; who would be naturally led to think but meanly of it, in comparison of the sublimer dramatic poetry. I must add, the very terms of the apology so expressly define and characterize lyric poetry, that it is something strange, it should have escaped vulgar notice: *musa lyrae solers* being evidently explained by *Romanae fidicen lyra* [4 O. iii. 23.]; and the epithet *cantor*, describing Apollo, as clearly as words can do it, in the peculiar character of *Lyric*.

407. CANTOR APOLLO. NATURA FIERET, &c.] The transition is delicate, and a fine instance of that kind of method, which the epistle demands. The poet had just been speaking of the ode, and its inspirer, *cantor Apollo*; and this, in the natural train of his ideas, suggested that enthusiasm, and stretch of genius, which is at once the characteristic and glory of the lyric composition. And this was ground enough, in an epistle, to pass on to say something concerning

ing the power and influence of genius in poetry in general. It was for want of attending to so plain a reflexion as this, that the excellent Heinſius trifled ſo egregiouſly, in his tranſpoſitions of the Epistles, and in particular of this very place. And the haſty cenſures, which Mr. Dacier paſſed on the poet's method, are apparently owing to no other cauſe. [See his Introduct. Remarks.] But to declare my ſenſe at parting, of the *latter* of theſe critics, I would ſay, as he himſelf does of the former, *C'eſt aſſez parlé contre M. DACIER, dont j'eſtime et admire autant la profonde érudition, que je condamne la mauvais uſage qu'il en a fait en quelques recontres.*

410. ALTERIUS SIC ALTERA POSCIT OPEM RES ET CONJURAT AMICE.] This concluſion, “that art and nature muſt conſpire to the production of a perfect piece,” is, in the general, unqueſtionably juſt. If we would know the diſtinct powers and provinces of each, a fine paſſage in Longinus will inform us. For, of the five ſources of the ſublime, enumerated by that critic, two only, “a grandeur of conception, and the pathetic,” come from *nature*: the reſt, “a juſt arrangement of figures,” “a ſplendid diction,” and “dignity of compoſition,” are of the province of *art*. Yet, though their powers are thus diſtinct, each, in order

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order to attain its due perfection, must conspire, and be consociated, with the other. For that “sublime of conception” and “pathetic enthusiasm” never make a more sure and lasting impression, than when clothed in the graces, and moderated by the sober sense of *art*: as, on the contrary, the milder beauties of “language” and “artificial composition” are never so secure of seizing the attention, as when raised and inspirited by the *pathos*, or *sublime*. So that the nature of the union, here recommended, is such, as makes it not only necessary to the completion of that great end, *viz.* the glory of perfect composition; but that either part, in the alliance, may fully effect its own. All which is but the larger explication of another passage in Longinus, who teaches, that ΤΟΤΕ Η ΤΕΧΝΗ ΤΕΛΕΙΟΣ, ΗΝΙΚ’ ΑΝ ΦΥΣΙΣ ΕΙΝΑΙ ΔΟΚΗΗ· Η Δ’ ΑΥ ΦΥΣΙΣ ΕΠΙΤΥΧΗΣ, ΟΤΑΝ ΑΑΝΘΑΝΟΥΣΑ ΠΕΡΙΕΧΗ ΤΗΝ ΤΕΧΝΗΝ. [ωρ. ὑψ. τμη. κβ.]

But here, in parting, it will be amusing, perhaps, to the curious reader to observe, what perpetual matter of debate this question hath furnished to the ancient learned.

It seems first to have taken its rise from the high pretension of poets to inspiration, [see

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Pind. Od. iii. Nem.], which was afterwards understood in too literal a sense, and in time extended to all works of genius or imitation. The orator, who, as Cicero tells us, is *near a-kin to the poet*, set up the same claim; principally, as it should seem, on the authority of Socrates, who taking occasion from the ill use that had been made of *rhetoric*, to decry it, as an *art*, was herein followed by the most illustrious of his scholars, amongst whom was Aristotle, [Quinct. l. ii. c. 17.] who had written a set treatise professedly with this view, though his books of rhetoric proceed on very different principles. The question afterwards appeared of so much moment to Cicero, that he discussed it in form, in one of his dialogues *De oratore*. And Quinctilian, in still later times, found himself obliged to resume the same debate, and hath accordingly considered it in an entire chapter.

The long continuance of so frivolous a dispute, and which admits so easy a decision, would go near to persuade one, if, as Shakespeare speaks, *they had not the privilege of antiquity upon them*, that the pens of the ancient *literati* were not always more wisely employed, than those of modern controversialists. If we ask the reason, it would seem to be owing to that ambitious spirit of subtlety and refinement, which, as Quinctilian observes, *puts men upon teaching not what*

what they believe to be true, but what, from the falsehood or apparent strangeness of the matter, they expect the praise of ingenuity from being able to maintain. This, I say, might seem to be the cause of so much perversity, on the first view; and unquestionably it had its influence. But the truth is, the real cause was something more general and extensive. It was, in fact, that natural proneness, so Longinus terms it, in mankind, to censure and degrade things present, ἰδιὸν ἀνθρώπων κατὰ μίμραν τὰ παρόντα. This in nothing holds truer, than in what concerns the state of literature; as may be seen from that unwearied industry of the learned to decry whatever appears to be the prevailing taste of the times; whether it be in suggesting some defect to be made good by future improvements; or, as is more common, because the easier and less invidious task, in setting up, and magnifying some former examples of a different cast and merit. Thus, in the case before us, exquisite art and commanding genius, being the two only means of rising to superior literary excellence, in proportion as any age became noted for the one, it was constantly defamed, and the preference given to the other. So, during the growth of letters in any state, when a sublimity of sentiment and strength of expression, make, as, under those circumstances, they always will, the

characteristic of the times, the critic, disgusted with the rude workings of nature, affects to admire only the nicer finishings and proportions of art. When, let but the growing experience of a few years refine and perfect the public taste, and what was before traduced as roughness and barbarity becomes at once nerves, dignity, and force. Then art is effeminacy; and judgment want of spirit. All now is rapture and inspiration. The exactest modern compositions are unmanly and unnatural, *et solos veteres legendos putant, neque in ullis aliis esse naturalem eloquentiam et robur viris dignum arbitrantur.* [Quint. l. x. c. 1.] The truth of this observation might be justified from many examples. The learning and art of *Pacuvius* (for so I understand the epithet *doctus*) carried it before the sublime of *Accius*; just as in elder Greece the smooth and correct *Simonides*, *tenuis Simonides*, as Quintilian characterizes him, bore away the prize from the lofty and high-spirited *Æschylus*. Afterwards indeed the case was altered. The Athenians, grown exact in the rules of good writing, became so enamoured of the bold flights of *Æschylus*, as with a little correction to admit him on the stage, who, by this means, frequently gained the prize from a polite and knowing people, for what had certainly lost it him in the simpler, and less informed theatre of his

his own times. Thus too it fared with the elder Latin poets, who, though admired indeed in their own age, but with considerable abatement from the reason before assigned, were perfectly idolized in that of Augustus; so as to require the sharpest satire of our poet, to correct the malevolent principle, from whence the affectation arose. But the observation holds of our own writers. There was a time, when the art of JONSON was set above the divinest raptures of SHAKESPEARE. The present age is well convinced of the mistake. And now the genius of SHAKESPEARE is idolized in its turn. Happily for the public taste, it can scarcely be too much so. Yet, should any, in the rage of erecting trophies to the genius of ancient poesy, presume to violate the recent honours of more correct poets, the cause of such critical perversity will be ever the same. For all admiration of past times, when excessive, is still to be accounted for the same way,

*Ingeniis non ille favet plauditque sepultis,
Nostra sed impugnat, nos nostraque lividus edit.*

The END of the FIRST VOLUME.

ART OF POETRY

his own times. That too it said with the
other Latin poets, who though admired in
their own age, but with conscious
ment from the reader, have since
lost their place in the estimation of
the literary taste of our age, to con-
sider the insouciant indifference, those who
affectionate were. But the observation holds
our own writers. I have seen many, when the
art of Johnson was the source of the
times of Spenser and Milton. The reader was
well convinced of the merits, and now the
fame of Spenser and Milton is in
the hands of the moderns, and the
two poets are the only ones
who are still read with interest.



THE END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.